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美纪

Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 3: Comprehending The Way by the Pond

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the universe was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller...than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

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Chapter 1 – Heart Filled With Murderous Intent

“Don’t think of escaping!” The Bi’An Tiger roared furiously, while at the same time chasing after Ji Ning on water at high speed. But with each step, waves exploded beneath his feet. After all, it had yet to reach the ‘one with the world’ level. It had to rely on its released monstrous energy to forcibly walk atop the water. In addition, it was only a land-based beast to begin with. Naturally, its running speed was even slower!

Actually, even in the mountains, the forests, or the plains, its speed would probably still be slightly lower than Ning’s, much less now, on water! It could only watch as Ning quickly escaped.

“Grrrr.” The Bi’An Tiger could only return. Staring at that ferocious battle going on within that massive formation, the Azure Skysnake King, occasionally expanding while occasionally contracting, the tiger mused, “How can this Azure Skysnake possibly resist the magical formation? No matter how long it struggles, in the end, it will have to submit!”

The formation called upon the natural power of the world and had unimaginable strength!

This Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation’s power was far beyond the ability of the Azure Skysnake to resist.

“Hahaha....” Ironwood Zhan stood atop the water, pointing at the distant enormous emerald snake, which was currently entangled by those countless streams of black and white energy. “Azure Skysnake, now that you have fallen into my formation, no matter how much you struggle, it is useless. Best obediently surrender and acknowledge me as master. That way, you’ll suffer a bit less!”

“Groooooowl.” The Azure Skysnake raised its head, roaring with fury.

"You don't submit?" Although Zhan didn't understand, he could sense the Azure Skysnake's fury and enmity. He immediately laughed coldly, "Azure Skysnake, in this boundless world, it is the human race which is truly in charge! It is the Grand Xia Dynasty who has unified this land! No matter how powerful you are, Godbeast, what can you really do? Even if I release you, others will come to capture you. I think you had best obediently submit to me!"

Ironwood Zhan was speaking nonstop.

But no matter what he said, the Azure Skysnake didn't pay attention to him, causing Zhan to truly grow angry. "Fine, then. I want to watch and see...if your bones are tougher, or if my Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation is tougher!"

"Crackle..." Black and white energy streams were wildly wrapping about it like a millstone, grinding the Azure Skysnake's scales to the point of shattering, with its jade blood staining the water below. But this scale-ripping, flesh-tearing pain couldn't make the Azure Skysnake lower its proud head in the slightest.

Shua !

The Azure Skysnake suddenly shrank to the thickness of a finger, temporarily escaping the entanglement of the black and white energy streams, but immediately afterwards, the energy streams once more wildly wrapped around it.

The energy continued to dissipate and reform without end! How arduous would it be to avoid these energy streams?

"Aaaaargh!" The finger-thick, miniature Azure Skysnake let out a fierce cry, suddenly transforming to an enormous size once again, even larger than Serpentwing! Sometimes large, sometimes small, it continuously struggled. Only in this way would it be able to reduce the amount of time the Yin Yang energy streams ground down upon it. After all, that grinding sensation truly, truly was painful.

At the same time the little Azure Skysnake was struggling, it was repeatedly trying to pounce towards Zhan as well. But the power of the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation was simply too great, not giving it the slightest chance to draw near Zhan.

Struggling repeatedly, the wounds on its body grew greater and greater. Its scales were shattered, and its jade blood leaked out.

"Yaaaaaaaaa !"

"Yaaaaaaaaa !"

One fierce cry after another.

The Azure Skysnake King was still struggling. As a monstrous beast, it was incomparably arrogant. How could it submit to this human in front of it? If it was a human Zifu Disciple, perhaps the Azure Skysnake would have been willing to lower its head, but this Ironwood Zhan wasn't qualified.

"Huh?" After a long time, Zhan began to frown.

"How is it still struggling?" Zhan stared at the Azure Skysnake, still incomparably wild despite being badly injured and being covered in wounds. "Although only part of the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation's power has been released, if it keeps on acting like this, it will be ground to death by the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation! Can it be that it would rather die than submit to me?"

Zhan gritted his teeth. With a thought, he caused the black and white energy streams binding the Azure Skysnake to begin to dissipate.

"Azure Skysnake!" Zhan pointed at the wounded, exhausted Diremonster. "I relied on the formation to suppress you, so most likely, you aren't convinced! Then you and I shall do battle. I won't rely on the assistance of the formation...as long as you can defeat me, I will release you. But if you lose, then you'll submit to me. Agreed?"

"Yaaaaaaa !"

The Azure Skysnake let out a few vicious sounds, then transformed to a length of ten or so meters. This was the most powerful form it could transform into. And then, it pounced towards Zhan!

"Hmph." A long black whip appeared out of nowhere in Ironwood Zhan's right hand. The whip had multiple natural-growing sharp nails embedded into it. This long black whip was the magic treasure, "Blackwood Vinewhip". It was one of the famous magic treasures of the Ironwood clan. With a powerful whipping motion, he sent the whip towards the Azure Skysnake, and it transformed into an enormous black blur.

Shua! Shua!

The Azure Skysnake rapidly dodged, managing to move past this whip.

"Huahuahua..." Ironwood Zhan continued to brandish the long whip in his hand. The whip spun in circle upon circle, covering the skies in countless enveloping circles towards the Azure Skysnake. And then, with a ripping sound, the Azure Skysnake lost yet another piece of scale and flesh from its body.

"Ssssssssssss ." The Azure Skysnake let out a furious hiss. Despite being wounded, it still pounced forward.

Zhan only smiled coldly, continuing to brandish his Blackwood Vinewhip. This wasn't the first time for him to fight against the Azure Skysnake. He was an expert at using the whip, and was completely able to counter the Azure Skysnake's agility! However, the Azure Skysnake was capable of fleeing very quickly. In the past, Zhan wasn't able to do anything about it, but now that the Azure Skysnake was trapped within the formation, there was nowhere for it to run.

"What do you think?" Zhan stood there, long whip dancing, with each whipping blow containing a power capable of cracking a small

mountain, causing the Azure Skysnake's body to crack open on multiple locations. "My strength is greater than yours. You had best obediently submit."

"Pa !"

The magic treasure's slammed against its body. Given that Zhan himself was a late-stage Xiantian expert, he was completely capable of suppressing it.

"Swoosh !"

This time, as it dodged past through dancing long whip, the Azure Skysnake suddenly disappeared, and then reappeared a few dozen meters away.

Ironwood Zhan was astonished, but immediately afterwards, his face changed greatly.

"Ssssss ..." The Azure Skysnake called out in excitement, while at the same time, with every single slithering motion of its body, it seemed to teleport dozens of meters, if not even farther.

"Die!" Ironwood Zhan's face was ferocious, and he seemed to have gone insane.

Rumble

The formation shuddered, and large amounts of black and white energy viciously slammed down towards the Azure Skysnake, but the Azure Skysnake only glanced icily at Ironwood Zhan, then disappeared with another slither.

"Bang!" The black and white energy collided, transforming into large amounts of chaotic energy.

"Damnable!" Ironwood Zhan howled madly, fists waving furiously.
"Damnable!!!"

“Void Blink! Void Blink!” Ironwood Zhan’s face was ferocious, and his eyes were red and insane. “This Azure Skysnake is actually capable of using Void Blink. Right. It is due to that child of the Ji clan. That child of the Ji clan has battled against the Azure Skysnake repeatedly...it must be that this has caused the Azure Skysnake to improve, allowing it to reach the ‘one with the world’ level and be able to utilize the Void Blink!”

Ironwood Zhan was utterly enraged.

Although there was only a single Azure Skysnake in the Swallow Mountain area, there were quite a few in the boundless territory ruled over by the Grand Xia Dynasty. Thus, Ironwood Zhan knew very well how powerful Azure Skysnakes were, which was why he so desperately wanted to tame this one.

Generally speaking, Diremonsters were capable of controlling water, or poison, or fire, or son on and so forth.

Even the likes of the Aquatic Rhino King and Serpentwing, non-Godbeast creatures, had this ability. But as a Godbeast, the Azure Skysnake King didn’t have a special ability...

But actually, it still had something!

Only, the Azure Skysnake King’s natural ability was simply too powerful. While it was at a low level of power, it wasn’t capable of utilizing it. Much like how a normal monstrous beast wasn’t capable of controlling water at the Houtian stage but was able to at the Xiantian stage, this Azure Skysnake King’s natural ability had to do with the ‘Void’. Even after it reached the Xiantian lifeform level, it still had to reach the ‘one with the world’ level before it was capable of instantly becoming one with the void, allowing it to utilize the Void Blink technique!

“Void Blink!” Ironwood Zhan ground his teeth. “A Azure Skysnake King capable of developing the Void Blink technique will quickly become incomparably powerful!”

The Void Blink...

This allowed the Azure Skysnake to be capable of going to some very secretive places, and even go steal some of the world's spirit fruits. This represented that its growing speed was about to enter a phase of explosive growth! Without question, this Azure Skysnake King was about to leave Eastmount Marsh and begin an adventuring journey. After all, only by going to other places would it be capable of acquiring more natural treasures and grow more rapidly in power. If it always stayed here comfortably, it would be a waste of its talent!

"Given the amount of hatred it bears me, in the future, when it returns to Swallow Mountain, it might come looking for me seeking revenge." Zhan was both furious and frightened.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!!!"

Ironwood Zhan bellowed in fury, the sound of his roars causing even the water to explode!

He was furious.

"All because of that Ji clan child!" Ironwood Zhan ground his teeth, filled with utter hatred.

If Ji Ning hadn't caused the Azure Skysnake King to advance so rapidly, how could it have suddenly made a breakthrough during this battle? Most likely, Zhan would have already tamed the Azure Skysnake. Now, he not only had been unable to tame it, he had also offended a powerful future enemy. The Azure Skysnake would definitely remember this grudge!

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The massive formation vanished. Ironwood Zhan collected all eight of the formation flags, then walked out atop the water, a sinister, shadowy look on his face.

"Master." The Bi'An Tiger transformed into a black-clothed man,

flying over. Seeing the look on his master's face, he knew that the taming attempt had failed. He hurriedly said, "Master, don't be angry. This Azure Skysnake was simply too foolish. It was its own fault that Master killed it!"

"It didn't die!" Ironwood Zhan said coldly.

"It didn't die?!" The black-clothed was astonished. "Then it?"

Ironwood Zhan shook his head. "It actually managed to comprehend the Void Blink technique. It fled."

"Butbutbut..." The black-clothed man found it hard to believe as well. The Azure Skysnake had actually managed to comprehend the Void Blink technique at the critical juncture.

"All of it is the fault of that Ji clan child." Zhan said coldly. "His power was on par with the Azure Skysnake. After repeated battles, the Azure Skysnake has improved greatly. Thus, during this battle, it suddenly sensed the world, allowing it to become 'one with the void' and use the Void Blink technique! This Ji clan's child ruined everything. I will definitely strip his skin and rip his tendons. Otherwise, I won't be able to get rid of this fury in my heart!"

The black-clothed man nodded repeatedly. "Master, don't worry. Before this, I shot several of my back-spikes at him, which are stained with the 'Iceflower Liquid'. Some of the Iceflower Liquid has already gotten onto his body. As long as we release the Ice Wasp, we'll definitely be able to find him.

"Fine." Zhan withdrew a gray sack from his waist. Loosening the sack, a semi-translucent, gem-like wasp flew out at high speed.

"Pursue."

Zhan and the Bi'an Tiger followed behind the Ice Wasp at high speed.

After they left, a green snake suddenly emerged atop the peaceful

water. The green snake stared from afar, a look of hope in its eyes. After it had battled against Ji Ning so many times, the two of them were evenly matched for so long. In addition, Ning had helped contribute to it being able to break through to the 'one with the world' level of movement technique and comprehend the Void Blink technique. It felt some gratitude towards Ning.

"Ssssss" The Azure Skysnake let out a soft sound. It hoped Ning would be able to escape. It had already done what it was capable of. After all, although right now, he had very formidable fleeing abilities, in terms of actual power, he was far from being Ironwood Zhan's match.

Chapter 2 – Comprehending ‘The Way’ by the Pond

Ji Ning, relying on his ‘one with the world’ footwork technique, ran at high speed, as fast as the wind. After leaving Eastmount Marsh, he continued to flee at high speed, moving most likely over a thousand kilometers through the mountain forests before coming to a halt. Actually, by now, the Golden Crow [the Sun] had already completely sunk beneath the horizon. However, the eastern horizon was still very red, and there was still some light cast on the ground.

“Whew!” Ning wiped the sweat from his forehead.

“I first ran three hundred kilometers on water, then another thousand kilometers on land. In addition, I was moving at my maximum speed. I’ve never run like this before. I didn’t expect that even with a body like mine, I still ended up so sweaty.” Ning usually could run for a thousand kilometers on Eastmount Marsh without sweating at all, but this time, he really had moved at his utmost speed.

Feeling exhausted, Ning slowly walked forward. There was a pool in front of him, and within the pool, there were a few floating lotus flowers. The flowers were not stained at all by the mud, and their stems were straight. The fragrance of the lotuses entered his nose, causing the exhausted Ning to let out a hint of a smile as he sat down next to the pool.

“I guess I managed to make it through that setback.” Ning withdrew a bamboo reed with a flip of his hand. The reed was filled with clean water. Raising his head, he took two gulps.

“I wonder how the little green snake is doing.” Ning sighed lightly. “Little green snake, don’t blame me. I’m not able to help you either. Alas, I haven’t reached the Xiantian level.”

“Xiantian!”

Just thinking about this made Ning feel a hint of worry.

The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], as the most powerful Fiendgod Body Refining method, was extremely powerful, but training it was simply too difficult. Even someone with his background found it so hard to breakthrough. 'Merge Yin and Yang, Fuse Fire and Water'. How was this accomplished?

"What do I need to do in order to break through?" Ning pondered bitterly.

Hu!

A gentle breeze blew by. The cool, summer night breeze was so comfortable. The breeze wafted through the lotus flowers in the pool. Some spun in place, first towards one direction, then towards the other.

Having reached the 'one with the world' level in the [Shadewind Steps], Ning naturally was able to mentally become one with the wind. When the wind blew past the lotus blossom, he could clearly sense...

"Huh?" Ning suddenly revealed a look of curiosity. "When the wind blows the lotus, it turns both left, then right!"

Ning suddenly felt as though he understood something.

"If a leaf is blown by the wind, it will be blown wildly without any rhythm at all!"

"If it was a small tree that was being blown down by the wind, it would only shake from left to right! That's because it doesn't have any enormous round leaves."

But when the lotus flower is blown upon, the petals of the lotus can turn left or turn right, cancelling out this force."

Raising his head, Ning stared at the sky. It wasn't completely dark yet, but in the skies, he could already faintly see the light of the moon. "The Golden Crow [Sun] falls, and the Moon Rabbit [Moon]

rises!"

"Turn left, turn right!"

"Day and night. Because there is day, thus there is the concept of night!" Ning murmured to himself. "In a place of utter darkness, a tiny hint of light is incomparably brilliant! The left and right turns of the lotus petal allow it to cancel out the two contrasting spins, allowing it to cancel out the force of the wind and stay in place, unmoved."

Ning closed his eyes.

His spirit was already 'one with the world', and he became one with the wind and the lotus flowers in the pool.

He could faintly sense some sort of enormous Principle, which hid ancient secrets that had existed since the creation of the endless universe...this secret, was the Dao [The Way]! The wind held the Dao within it, and the Dao itself was vast and unknowable. But when the wind blew past the lotus flower...Ning was capable of seeing the shadow of the Dao flash through the lotus flowers. Capable of finding a hint of the movements and the true appearance of the Dao!

Ning quietly sat there in the lotus position by the side of the pool, completely lost in thought as he attentively meditated on the hint of the 'Dao' which he had sensed from the lotus flowers circular movements.

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Comprehending the Dao was something that one could hope for but not ask for.

In that moment when his soul, his thoughts, the environment, and everything else all fused together, he was able to just barely touch a hint of the Dao. But in order to touch the Dao...the prerequisite was that one would first have to become 'one with the world'. Only after one's mind could completely become one with the world was one

capable of touching the Eternal Dao.

"Huahuahua..." A stream of water slowly flowed through a small creek covered up by the wild grass.

"Gugugu!"

Night descended, and the forest was now filled with the croaking of frogs.

Slowly....

Rays of light began to surround Ning, still seated in the lotus position. First, some rays of watery light appeared, slowly forming one enormous lotus petal after another around him. One watery lotus petal after another surrounded Ning, currently blossoming while swaying gently in the breeze.

Immediately afterwards, dots of fiery light began to gather as well, forming into fiery lotus petals. These enormous lotus petals of flame also wrapped around Ning.

Two layers of lotus petals.

The first layer was of watery lotus petals. The second was of fiery lotus petals. Each layer had exactly three petals.

"Hu!" Fire and water intersected. A wind arose out of nowhere.

Huahuahua....

Between the two layers of lotus petals, a wind arose out of nowhere. The two layers of lotus petals began to swivel. The lower layer of watery lotus petals swiveled to the left, while the upper layer of fiery lotus petals were turning to the right! The two layers of lotus petals were completely turning in opposite directions...slowly, sluggishly, they rotated, but Ning himself didn't utilize any of his own strength at all.

Everything happened by nature.

"Swoosh!" A gray-furred wolf loped out from within the forests, its jade eyes focused on that distant, fur-clad youth. Only, those enormous lotus petals, multiple meters in size, which were surrounding that fur-clad youth made the wolf slightly confused. As a beast with low intelligence, however, its innate sense was telling it that those rotating petals of fire and water were nothing more than part of the world, just like the clouds...there was no need to pay attention to them.

The gray wolf bared its fangs, staring at the fur-clad youth.

It was very hungry!

The fur-clad youth was just sitting there without moving, as though he was asleep. He definitely wouldn't have the ability to fight back. In addition, the flesh of this youth seemed so tender and delectable. The gray wolf could already feel its saliva coming into its mouth.

It hesitated no more!

"Swoosh!" The gray wolf charged forward rapidly, pouncing forward with fangs bared, preparing to bite down on that fur-clad youth.

But as soon as it leapt within two meters of those layers of lotus petals...

"Boom!"

The wind created by those two layers of lotus petals contained within them a hint of the destructive force of the world. In an instant, it chopped that wolf into tiny pieces, with blood splattering everywhere, some seeping deep into the earth, while the rest flowed into the pool.

Nightfall.

Ironwood Zhan and the Bi'an Tiger he commanded, in the former of a black-clothed man, were currently following behind that Ice Wasp as they traversed the mountain forests.

The Ice Wasp was just a wasp, after all. It wasn't an enormous flying beast, nor was it a Diremonster. One could imagine how much slower it was! It was far from being even a tenth as fast as Ning

"This child of the Ji clan really can run." Ironwood Zhan's face was gloomy and sinister. "After leaving Eastmount Marsh, he kept on fleeing..."

The black-clothed man said hurriedly, "Master, the Ice Hornet's flying speed is much slower. If this child of the Ji clan keeps running without stopping, all the way to one of the Prefectures of the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan, we probably won't have any way to catch him."

"Run all the way to one of the Five Prefectures?" Ironwood Zhan shook his head. "Too far. Eastmount Marsh is already at the borders of the Ji clan's territory. To run from the border to one of the Five Prefectures at once? That child of the Ji clan shouldn't run that far." Although he said this, in his heart, Zhan was worried as well. If Ning truly had run to any one of the Five Prefectures, no matter how confident Zhan was in his abilities, he wouldn't dare to charge into the lair of his enemies.

"We'll slowly pursue him."

Ironwood Zhan said. "Wherever the Iceflower Liquid passes by, it will leave that unique aroma. It won't dissipate for at least three days. We can't smell it, but the Ice Wasp can. As long as that child of the Ji clan doesn't flee to the Five Prefecture, he will die!"

"Right, he will die." The black-clothed man said hurriedly.

"He ruined everything for me, and caused me to have a powerful future foe." Ironwood Zhan could visualize that Azure Skysnake

adventuring in the outside world through the usage of its Void Blink, becoming more powerful, reaching the Zifu level, then coming back to kill him...he couldn't help but feel fear, while at the same time, he hated Ji Ning even more. "I definitely have to personally tear his skin off and rend his tendons!"

"Right! Tear his skin, rip his tendons!" The black-clothed man ground his teeth as well.

The Golden Crow [Sun] was beginning to raise its head over the eastern skies. It was daybreak. Ironwood Zhan and the Bi'an Tiger under his command were still slowly pursuing. They had pursued for so long, both of them had bellies full of anger. This child of the Ji clan really was too cautious. After leaving Eastmount Marsh, he had actually fled for at least another thousand kilometers.

A Ice Wasp that flew for a thousand kilometers would be very tired as well. Fortunately, this Ice Wasp was a mutant.

"Master." The black-clothed man's eyes lit up, and he hurriedly pointed to the distant.

"Huh?" The also-tired Zhan turned to look in that direction. Instantly, he could make out an indistinct human figure at the distant side of a pool. This caused his mind to instantly wake up.

Ironwood Zhan's eyes lit up. He licked the corner of his lips, then said mentally, "Let's go take a look."

Between master and spirit beast, at a close distance, there was the ability to maintain psychic communications. As for the exact distance...it depended on how powerful their souls were. Generally speaking, a Xiantian lifeform and his spirit beast had to maintain a distance of ten meters if they wanted to be able to converse mentally.

The two carefully crept forward, trying not to make any noise.

But in truth, even if they made some noise, Zhan wasn't afraid. He was, after all, a late stage Xiantian expert. When running at full speed, he was a bit faster than even Ji Ning, and in addition, he carried on him a 'Divine Movement Seal' as well as a number of other ordinary Dao seals. How could he possibly allow Ning to escape?

"What an idiot. No matter how careful I am, I still am making some noise, but he didn't notice at all. He should be a Fiendgod Body Refiner. Logically speaking, he should have excellent senses. Hmph, hmph, he really has no experience at all. He's probably fallen asleep." Zhan laughed coldly. "All the better. It will make my life easier. Otherwise, I'd have to waste a Divine Movement Seal.

Ironwood Zhan and the black-clothed man continued moving forward.

Slowly...

They could make the person out clearly.

"What?" They were both stunned.

This was because the Sun had already risen by now. Under the light of the Sun, those enormous fiery lotus petals and the watery lotus petals appeared semi-translucent. After all, these lotus petals were not real lotus petals. They were formed by the energy of the world. Under the light of the sun, they instantly appeared semi-translucent.

The two layers of enormous lotus petals were still slowly swiveling in opposite directions, but contained within them a very strange rhythm. In the center of these two enormous layers of rotating lotus petals, Ning was seated there in the lotus position.

"What...what is this?" Zhan, although highly experienced, had never seen a sight like this. "Can it be that this is created from internal ki?"

"Still, even if he has broken through to the Xiantian lifeform stage, he is still only an early stage Xiantian. I imagine he doesn't have any magic treasures on him." A fierce look appeared on Zhan's face.

Chapter 3 – Fire And Water Descend, Giving Birth to Xiantian

Ironwood Zhan and his Bi'an Tiger drew near at high speed, quickly arriving by the side of the pool.

"It really is beautiful." Ironwood Zhan couldn't help but sigh in amazement as he stared at the reflecting light of the setting sun, which shone down upon those two blooming, enormous lotus petals. But the more he looked at them, the more nervous he became. He was, after all, a late stage Xiantian expert. Although he hadn't reached the 'one with the world' level, he could already dimly sense how extraordinary those two layers of petals were.

"Master." The Bi'an Tiger looked at Zhan as well. "What should we do now?"

"Don't be impatient. He is in front of us and won't be able to escape. Let's give him a test, first!" Zhan instructed mentally. With a wave of his hand, he released his Xiantian force, which directly dragged a rock into his hand. And then, with a powerful throw, he infused this rock with his Xiantian energy, transforming it into a ray of light which shot straight towards Ji Ning, still seated in the lotus-position.

Although he just threw a rock, a Ninefang Warrior would definitely be killed.

"Hua!"

When the stone reached the area of ten meters of Ning and intersected with those two layers of lotus petals, it instantly became frozen! That invisible killing energy, with a hiss, transformed the rock into dust.

The Bi'an Tiger and Ironwood Zhan both felt their hearts tighten. They exchanged glances. Clearly, they were somewhat puzzled by those two mysterious lotus layers.

"I refuse to believe it." Zhan sneered coldly, and the Blackwood

Vinewhip appeared in his hands out of nowhere.

"Hu!"

Ironwood Zhan lashed out with his long whip. The Blackwood Vinewhip elongated, coiling around a thick nearby tree. With a massive pull! Honglong...the entire tree was ripped out by the roots, carrying with it a large amount of dirt, swinging about along with Zhan's whip.

Boom...this tens of thousands of pounds heavy tree smashed directly towards Ning, seated in the lotus position. When the massive tree trunk slammed against those two layers of translucent, enormous lotus leaves, it instantly shattered apart. However, the terrifying power of the collision contained within the massive tree caused the two layers of lotus leaves to tremble.

Ning, who had been meditating in the lotus position, shook slightly. His eyes opened up.

As his eyes opened, he saw that the two enormous lotus leaves surrounding his body were dissipating as an enormous tree trunk smashed down upon him. In the distance, Ironwood Zhan and that black-clothed man were sneering coldly at him.

"You ruined my good fortune!" Watching the two layers of enormous lotus petals dissipate, Ning instantly realized what he had gained this night, and also realized how priceless these insights had been. If nobody had disturbed him, he probably would have been able to gain insights for even longer. But unexpectedly, Zhan had ruined it for him. It must be understood that these moments of enlightenment were something which could only be hoped for and not asked for. It might be decades, if not centuries, until the next time something like this would occur.

"Damn you!"

Ning swept out with a palm, and with a booming sound, smashed

that massive tree trunk into two halves. One half landed into the middle of the pond, crushing many of the lotus flowers. The other half fell down against several other nearby trees, sending dust everywhere.

“Little child of the Ji clan!” Ironwood Zhan laughed ferociously. “You fled a thousand kilometers into the forest, but I still caught you in the end! Today is the day you die!”

Ning glanced at him coldly, and then immediately summoned forth the Lunar energy and the Solar energy in his body. Over the course of the previous night’s meditation, he had gained just a hint of insight into the true nature of the Dao, but that hint of insight was enough to allow him to understand, without question, what the method was for breaking through to the next level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. Nothing in the world was truly opposite of anything else! It was much like how night and day were seemingly opposites, but in reality, were just two different aspects of the sky.

It was much like the two layers of fire and water lotus petals that had surrounded him. Not only did they not cancel each other out, they had even increased each other’s power. Why?

A lotus flower had a stalk, which was what allowed the lotus petals to swivel!

The ‘stalk’ of the two layers of fire and water lotus petals was Ning himself!

Solar energy, Lunar energy...how to fuse them?

By finding that ‘stalk’ which connected the Solar energy and the Lunar energy!

“Come!”

Ning’s eyes were filled with absolutely certainty.

His body had already completely brought forth all of his Solar and Lunar energy, which instantly filled every part of his body. Be it his hair or his skin or his organs or his very cells...it filled every part of him! Every single thread of Lunar energy and Solar energy began to swirl around each other, but their natures caused them to be unwilling to fuse.

"Huahuahua..." All of the Lunar energy and Solar energy were swiveling, like the lotus flowers that had been blown upon by the wind.

They were also like the two 'fish' of the yin-yang Taiji diagram, forever chasing each other.

The Sun. The Moon.

They constantly chased after each other...and as they did, they contained that hint of the Dao which Ning had understood.

Slowly, in the center of the circling Solar energy and Lunar energy, a new force arose!

Instantly...

In that deep, boundless void, separated from this place by incomprehensibly many worlds, there lay the two Supreme Stars; the Solar Star [Sun] and the Lunar Star [Moon]. Each of them emitted a hint of their power; the Solar Truefire and the Lunar Truewater appeared on each side around Ning, and also activated the power of fire and water of the surrounding world.

"Bang!" "Bang!"

The surrounding world instantly became filled with a sea of flame as well as an abyss of water.

Though this took time to describe, in truth, as soon as Ning had shattered that tree, he had immediately activated the energy in his body and began to break through. Ironwood Zhan and his Bi'an Tiger

saw with their own eyes the boundless flames and water appear out of nowhere, causing even them to feel fear. Wherever the water passed through, everything was frozen into ice sculptures, while wherever the fire passed through, everything was consumed by the flames.

At the same time, within the surging water, the faint outline of the Jade Rabbit could be seen.

Deep within the boundless flames, there was also the shadow of a three-legged Golden Crow.

Between the Jade Rabbit and the Golden Crow, there was Ning!

"This...this..." Zhan was so shocked, his face changed dramatically. "Can this be the legendary...the legendary [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]?"

The Golden Crow and the Jade Rabbit had both appeared!

Without question, this was the legendary [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique. In the entire Swallow Mountain area, in at least the past thousand years, there hadn't been a single person who was known to have relied on this technique to become a Xiantian lifeform. Although Zhan had read this technique and knew what the breakthrough looked like, this was his first time personally witnessing the amazing spectacle of a breakthrough.

"Hrmph." Ironwood Zhan's hands summoned a formation flag out of nowhere. He immediately flew backwards, then began running around Ning, surrounded by boundless water and fire, in a circular pattern, while constantly throwing out one flag after another, all of which stabbed deep into the mud.

In but a few seconds, eight formation flags had all been planted, covering an area of a square kilometer.

Ironwood Zhan now simply stood from afar and watched.

"Master, kill him." The Bi'an Tiger said hurriedly. "Right now, he is breaking through. This is his weakest moment."

"No!" Zhan hurriedly shouted. "He trains in the number one Fiendgod Body Refining, and is currently surrounded by the power of the Supreme Stars, the Solar Star and the Lunar Star! When breaking through to the Xiantian lifeform level, these two Supreme Stars will send down a hint of their Solar Truefire and Lunar Truewater, breaking through countless barriers to allow him to evolve and be reborn into the body of a true Xiantian-level Fiendgod."

"Then it becomes all the more important for us to stop him." The Bi'an Tiger said frantically.

"Don't you understand?" Ironwood Zhan's face was ashen as he stared at the distant Ning, wrapped by the endless flames and water. "Right now, he is surrounded by boundless icy water and cocooned in flames. At the heart of the boundless icy water is a hint of the Lunar Truewater! At the heart of the endless flames is a hint of the Solar Truefire! Even if a Zifu Disciple were to touch it, he would instantly be frozen and shatter or be burnt to ashes, much less you and me! Not even his soul would be left. He wouldn't even have the chance to go to the Netherworld Kingdom to be reborn!"

"As fearsome as that?" The Bi'an Tiger was shocked.

"Of course it is!" Ironwood Zhan's face was solemn. "This is power which comes from the two Supreme Stars! Solar Truefire and Lunar Truewater. Who dares to touch them?"

"Then, then are we just going to watch?" The Bi'an Tiger said frantically. "Just watch as this child of the Ji clan becomes even more powerful?"

"Don't worry!" Zhan growled. "Right now, the two Supreme Stars have bequeathed their power to him, and he is beginning to transcend his mortal coil and be reborn into a true Xiantian Fiendgod. After he breaks through, that hint of Solar Truefire and Lunar Truewater will

disappear. After all, the power of the Solar Truefire and the Lunar Truewater doesn't belong to this little child of the Ji clan himself.

Ironwood Zhan sneered coldly, "I've already set down the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation. After this little child of the Ji clan breaks through, he'll no longer have the protective power of the Supreme Stars. I will immediately activate the formation! No matter what, he'll only be an early Xiantian lifeform without a single magic treasure. I, on the other hand, am a late Xiantian lifeform with the assistance of the formation!"

"Right." The Bi'an Tiger nodded as well.

"But this child of the Ji clan really is amazing!" Ironwood Zhan couldn't help but sigh in praise. "[Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. This is the legendary, most powerful Fiendgod Body Refining technique. Virtually all tribes of a certain size are in possession of it! But in a thousand years, in the entire Swallow Mountain area, there hasn't been a single person who has reached Xiantian through it. If he is permitted to grow, he will definitely become the number one person of the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan, and perhaps even the entire Swallow Mountain! But no matter how powerful he will be, right now, he will only have reached the Xiantian level. Haha...I feel wonderful when I think about how I'm about to kill such a monstrous genius."

What did Xiantian mean?

It meant to be born from the heavens and from nature. Only that was a true Xiantian lifeform.

Generally speaking, most Ki Refiners only had the inner ki energy in their bodies transform into Xiantian Afterwards, the energy would wash through their entire body, allowing them to reach a quick and agile state! But actually, this was the weakest type of Xiantian body. A casual sword thrust through the heart would cause them to die.

But for Fiendgod Body Refiners...their entire body would be reborn into the body like a Fiendgod's. Fiendgods could have their bodies chopped into eighteen parts, but as long as their head wasn't destroyed, they would not die! Generally speaking, most Fiendgod Body Refining techniques were low-grade, to the point of even relying on tattooing the divine patterns onto their bodies.

But the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] relied on the power of the two Supreme Stars to naturally generate those two major divine tattoos.

When breaking through to the Xiantian level, the Solar Truefire and Lunar Truewater of the two Supreme Stars would descend...fire and water would coincide, giving birth to a Fiendgod's body! This sort of Fiendgod body wasn't one bit inferior to those trueborn Fiendgods of the ancient Fiendgod Era. Thus, this was reputed to be the number one technique in the world!

"Pipa!" Ning could sense every single cell in his body explode. And then, the divine power of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] caused the Solar Truefire and the Lunar Truewater to begin to reforge every single cell anew. The hint of Solar Truefire and Lunar Truewater which the two Supreme Stars had sent down, in turn, were being utterly consumed in the process of forging this new Xiantian Fiendgod.

The mortal vessel fell away!

The Fiendgod body formed!

Hua...The Solar Truefire and the Lunar Truewater were consumed, and the countless amounts of fire and water which surrounded them dispersed as well, revealing the fur-clad Ji Ning. Although he had leapt into the Xiantian level, the furs hadn't been damaged by the fire and water at all. Only, Ning's skin was now emitting an enchanting radiance, as though he were a gem formed by the heavens.

Ning opened his eyes and stared at the distant Ironwood Zhan and the Bi'an Tiger. He said only two words. "Now, die!"

The Divine Solar Tattoo and Divine Lunar Tattoo on his back instantly activated.

Boom! Boom!

An enormous flaming dragon and an enormous water dragon appeared out of nowhere, formed from the fire and water summoned by the Divine Solar Tattoo and Divine Lunar Tattoo. Containing terrifying destructive power, it charged straight towards the distant Ironwood Zhan and Bi'an Tiger! This was the proof of the Xiantian level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]; the ability to control fire and water!

Chapter 4 – Lotus Petals of Fire and Water

Ironwood Zhan and the Bi'an Tiger were both astonished. Zhan hurriedly activated his Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation, while shouting loudly, "Be careful, he can control fire and water. The ability of Xiantian Fiendgods of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] to control water and fire is extraordinary. Once water and fire come out simultaneously, even most ordinary Xiantian lifeforms can be killed!"

The reason he shouted so loudly was because as soon as the Bi'an Tiger had seen the fire and water, it had already transformed into its real body and begun to retreat. Once the distance between the two increased, they were no longer capable of spiritual communication. But how could the speed of the Bi'an Tiger compare to that of the water and fire?

"Boom ..." An enormous water dragon instantly coiled around the Bi'an Tiger, causing a layer of frost to appear on it. At the same time, the other fire dragon also wrapped itself around the Bi'an Tiger. The water dragon and fire dragon simultaneously coiled around it, the water dragon filled with boundless cold, while the fire dragon was filled with endless heat...

Hot and cold.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

The Bi'an Tiger's fur began to crack, and his red flesh and muscles began to be revealed, then quickly char.

"Groooooooooowl." The Bi'an Tiger roared.

"Still not dead!" Ji Ning's gaze grew colder.

The water dragon that had been coiling around the Bi'an Tiger suddenly loosened, then quickly began to transform, changing into an enormous flowing lotus petal. At the same time, the fire dragon

also quickly transformed into a blazing lotus petal.

The water lotus petal was below.

The fire lotus petal was above.

The Bi'an Tiger was in the middle. Despite how it tried to struggle and flee, it was useless. The two lotus petals followed it wherever it went.

"Waterflame Lotus, smelt!" With a thought from Ning, instantly the two lotus petals began to slowly revolve. It was like two terrifying millstones slowly crushing down while revolving. Earlier, Ning had just been unconsciously activated the energy of the world to form those two protective lotus petals through his slight understanding of the Dao, and yet the power had already been so tremendous. But now, Ning was himself a Xiantian lifeform, capable of controlling both fire and water. Adding onto that basic power the hint of the Dao he had understood...the power became hundreds of times greater than before.

The petals of the Waterflame Lotus revolved. The Bi'an Tiger caught between them only felt a surge of heat and cold, and it felt far more miserable than before! Its entire body seemed to have lost all feeling! At the same time, as the water and fire intersected, a wind arose out of nowhere, and that wind filled with a powerful killing force descended directly upon the Bi'an Tiger.

"Ka ..." The Bi'an Tiger's charred body was like a porcelain doll. It shattered into many little pieces, its eyes filled with incomprehension as they grew dim.

The Bi'an Tiger had died!

"It is actually this powerful." Ning's heart was filled with surprise and delight as well. "With the water and fire I control as the base, and then formed into the protective Waterflame Lotus which I developed, I was able to execute a middle Xiantian level Diremonster, without

even giving it a chance to fight back.”

Although the above took time to describe, a battle between experts was incredibly fast.

From the moment when Ning created the Waterflame Lotus to the moment when the Bi'an Tiger died, only a heartbeat's worth of time had occurred.

“Boom ...” The Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation which had surrounded this square kilometer fully released its power as well, and lines of black energy and white energy criss-crossed towards Ning.

Ironwood Zhan was shocked by how easily his Bi'an Tiger had been executed as well. And then, with a savage expression, he howled, “Within my Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation, even if you are a monstrous talent which Swallow Mountain sees once in a millennium, you will still surely die! Die!”

Lines of viper-like black and white energy instantly pounced towards Ning.

“Hrmph.”

With but a thought, instantly fire and water appeared out of nowhere next to his body. The fire and water transformed into lotus petals, with two layers of enormous petals of the Waterflame Lotus hovering about him, waiting for those black and white energy streams to attack. When they did...with a thought from Ning, the Waterflame Lotus suddenly fused!

Like a budding flower, those upward-pointing lotus petals formed into a massive lotus flower bud that was over ten meters high, instantly ensconcing Ning within them.

“Pengpengpeng ...” The black and white energy waves came crashing down.

The Waterflame Lotus, although having fused into a flower bud, was still slowly swiveling. The inner layer was made of fire lotus petals, while the outer layer was made from water lotus petals. They continued to slowly swivel in opposite directions. No matter how the black and white energy struck against it time and time again, sometimes just barely breaking through the outer layer of the water lotus petals, the water lotus petals would once more reform into their normal appearance.

After all, fire and water could always part and reform; they weren't solid substances to begin with. Even if they were occasionally broken through, with but a thought, Ning could reform them!

"What?" Ironwood Zhan was shocked. "How is this possible? My Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation...this is an extremely powerful formation. Given my power when using it, even if I were to meet with an opponent who was a peak Xiantian lifeform, I wouldn't be afraid. How could it be that it can't even break through the protective lotus of this child of the Ji clan? What is that protective lotus? How is it that I've never even heard of it?"

But how could Ironwood Zhan know that Ning had previously already reached the 'one with the world' level. The greatest benefit of his previous night's worth of enlightenment was...this protective lotus, which already had a hint of the true meaning of the Dao within it.

A Xiantian lifeform created by the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was incomparably powerful to begin with, and the fire and water it controlled was far stronger than that of the fire and water which most Diremonsters could create. When infusing that with the hint of the true Dao through the Waterflame Lotus, blocking a mere formation naturally was nothing at all.

"Ironwood Zhan, you've chased for such a long time. Let me repay you now, and send you on the next leg of your journey!"

Within the lotus bud, Ning stared through the flowing water lotus petals and the blazing fire lotus petals, seeing the distant, unclear

figure. In addition, his mind had reached the 'one with the world' level...naturally, he could sense the auras of all nearby creatures, and could clearly sense the location of Zhan.

"Die."

With but a thought from Ning.

In the area where Ironwood Zhan was standing, yet another fiery lotus petal and watery lotus petal appeared. One above him, one below him, crushing down upon Zhan like millstones.

"Formation, aid me!" Ironwood Zhan, seeing the situation, was terrified. This was how his servant, the Bi'an Tiger, had died just now. He hurriedly controlled the black and white energy streams, wildly wrapping them around himself to block the grinding, crushing force of this Waterflame Lotus. By doing so, he was just barely able to block it. Although occasionally, some fire and water would break through, his Xiantian ki was able to block it.

"How can he simultaneously create two lotus flowers?" Zhan was filled with shock and dread. "Such a powerful attack should take up almost all of his concentration."

But how could he know...

When he was four years old, Ning's soul was already almost on par with a Zifu Disciple. Right now, his soul was already far above that of a Zifu Disciple. Dividing his mind to execute two separate Waterflame Lotus techniques was simplicity itself.

"You actually haven't died!" Protected within the lotus bud, Ning quickly charged towards Ironwood Zhan.

"Retreat." Ironwood was so frightened that his face changed. He ground his teeth.

Flee!

This decision was made quite decisively. He was, after all, born into the Ironwood clan. He knew very well that once someone trained to the Xiantian lifeform level in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], the power of the practitioner would be hundreds of times that of ordinary Fiendgod Body Refiners. Although right now, Ning was only an early Xiantian lifeform, he was capable of matching other late-stage Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiners!

He, Ironwood Zhan, was nothing more than a late-stage Xiantian Ki Refiner. Engage in close combat with a Fiendgod Body Refiner of this level? That was just suicide!

Before this, he had been relying on the fact that Ning didn't have any magic treasures, but if even the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation couldn't do anything to Ning, if he were to continue to fight with Ning, would that be suicide?

"An early Xiantian whose battle power is equivalent to a peak Xiantian. What a monster. The Ji clan actually produced such a monster. I definitely have to inform the Ancestor and have him be exterminated as soon as possible. Otherwise, in the future, he will be a calamity to the Ironwood clan!" Ironwood Zhan was utterly terrified, especially by those Waterflame Lotuses. They were simply too powerful.

Formations had to be prepared in advance, but Ning's Fire Water Lotus could be created with but a thought, and it was even more powerful than his formation. This was too...

"He must be eliminated." Ironwood Zhan's only thought was to go back and report this to his clan's Ancestor."

Both the Ironwood clan and the Ji clan...as two of the six hegemony of the Swallow Mountain area, had Zifu Disciples standing guard over them. That was why they had the ability to be acknowledged by the Grand Xia Dynasty to become ministers of the Grand Xia Dynasty.

"Divine Movement Seal!" With a flip of Zhan's hand, a black, leaf-like

paper seal suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The paper seal was covered with what looked like veins of blood, and was covered with an ancient, strange character which faintly emanated a mysterious, rippling aura. Ironwood Zhan sent a surge of his Xiantian ki into this seal.

Hua!

The seal instantly transformed into a shadowy word which fused into Ironwood Zhan's body.

"Flee!" Ironwood Zhan immediately transformed into a ray of light, quickly fleeing afar, not even bothering to collect his Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation flags.

This was because Ironwood Zhan knew very well that right now, he was still relying on the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation to protect him against that Waterflame Lotus. In addition, collecting those eight formation flags would also take up time. It would give that terrifying youth of the Ji clan a chance to catch up to him, at which point, he wouldn't just lose the eight formation flags. He would lose his life.

"He ran?" Ji Ning hurriedly chased afterwards. His Xiantian Fiendgod body, matched with his 'one with the world' footwork, caused his speed to become even more rapid. He transformed into a ray of light as well, chasing after Zhan.

"Just slightly slower than me?" Ironwood Zhan was greatly shocked. "Before, when he hadn't yet broken through to the Xiantian level yet, I was faster than him. But now, even after using a precious Divine Movement Seal, we're roughly on par." Ironwood Zhan couldn't help but feel his heart ache with the cost, but grinding his teeth, he took out yet another Dao seal, covered with that same ancient network of veins atop it. He filled his Xiantian ki into that Dao seal.

Yet another illusory word appeared, then entered his body.

Light Body Seal!

"*Swoosh !*" Ironwood Zhan transformed into a blue blaze as he retreated even faster.

"Won't be able to catch him." Ning's eyes had a hint of unwillingness to accept this outcome in them. As an Fiendgod Body Refiner expert, his speed was already incredible. But Ironwood Zhan had utilized two Dao seals in succession; a Light Body Seal, and a Divine Movement Seal...although these seals weren't nearly as valuable as the 'Traceless Talisman', they were still able to allow Ironwood Zhan's speed to explosively increase.

Ning didn't have any Dao seals right now. In addition, even if he had them, he wouldn't be able to use them, because Dao seals and magic treasures all required one to have Xiantian ki in order to use them.

Swoosh ! Swoosh !

Ironwood Zhan fled out of the area of the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation, pulling ahead of Ning, causing Ning to be unable to utilize his Waterflame Lotus against him. This was because the Waterflame Lotus was formed through his ability to control fire and water, but there was a limit to how far a Xiantian Fiendgod could maintain the control. At too great a distance, control would no longer be possible.

"Hahaha..." Ironwood Zhan let out a sigh of relief. Without the threat from the Waterflame Lotus, and having pulled away from Ning, he finally relaxed. But then, he was filled with hate. Hatred for this Ji Ning. After all, he had lost his Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation.

"Boy of the Ji clan, feel happy for now. I will definitely report this to the Ancestor, and also to Snowdragon Mountain! The Ji clan is the mortal foe of both my Ironwood clan as well Snowdragon Mountain. A monster like you is someone which both Snowdragon Mountain and my Ironwood clan will eradicate as soon as possible." Ironwood Zhan's heart was filled with hatred.

Chapter 5. Plum Blossom Fragrance, Assailing the Nose

Ironwood Zhan moved as quickly as a ray of blue smoke, fleeing at high speed. Right at that moment, the many large, tall trees in front of him suddenly began to crash down in front of him, completely blocking the road ahead of Zhan. Some of those trees even flew through the air towards him at high speed.

"What is going on?" Ironwood Zhan's face lost all color.

With a mighty wave of his black vine whip, he transformed it into a series of rays of light, slicing towards several trees that were flying towards him. As though they had been chopped apart, the large tree trunks were split in half, but Zhan's speed had been lessened as well.

"Huahua ..."

From every direction, many branches, tree trunks, and even boulders and chunks of earth all began to fly over, wildly throwing themselves at Ironwood Zhan.

"What, what is going on?" Zhan was completely stunned.

"These boulders, branches, trees, why are they all flying towards me?" Zhan had never heard of something like this. Even a Zifu Disciple would only be able to fly on his own magic treasures by standing on them, then ordering the magic treasures to fly! Not even Zifu Disciples were capable of making ordinary items fly like this.

Countless boulders and tree trunks filled the sky, smashing towards Zhan and forcing his speed to lessen.

"Ironwood Zhan, you won't be able to flee!" From behind, another ray of light shot towards him. It was Ji Ning, and Ji Ning was shouting at him.

"How did you accomplish this?" Zhan shouted while slicing through

the trees, hoping to continue to be able to flee, but under the attack of the surrounding earth, boulders, and tree trunks, he wasn't able to run at high speed at all.

Ji Ning only smirked.

Right.

He had accomplished this. Just then, after Zhan had used the 'Divine Movement Seal' and the 'Light Body Seal', he had nearly fled. Naturally, Ji Ning had grown desperate! In that frantic moment, Ning had discovered that his powerful thought waves were causing even the water of the pool and the earth to shake.

He could clearly sense how his consciousness seemed to have become an invisible hand, capable of grasping the nearby trees and mud, as well as all other things.

"Divine will!" Ning instantly was filled with a surge of wild joy.

When a soul grew excessively powerful, some strange things would occur.

Generally speaking, Zifu Disciples were capable of splitting their minds!

Generally speaking, Wanxiang Adepts were capable of 'divine will'!

Primal Daoists were capable of opening the 'eye of heaven' and utilize their 'divine sense'!

visualization techniques were extremely rare and mysterious. In the Ji clan, nobody had even heard of such a thing as a visualization technique! If one wanted to strengthen one's soul? Generally, the only method was to train their will, meditate on the Dao, and strengthen first the body, then the soul. Ji Ning's training in accordance with the [Nuwa Painting] had already nearly reached a limit. That night of enlightenment towards the Dao had been extremely beneficial to his soul.

After gaining a greater understanding of the Dao, fire and water had then descended from the heavens, giving him a Fiendgod's body. As the body grew stronger, the soul would strengthen once again.

Unconsciously, Ning's soul had already reached the level of being capable of 'divine will'! Only, he didn't know that until when Ironwood Zhan had fled. Desperate, Ning unconsciously had caused his willpower to affect the water and the earth, which made him realize what he had achieved.

"You won't be able to flee." Ning used his divine will to control the nearby things, causing the nearby trees, mud, and stones to all surround Zhan.

"Can it be that this wasn't done by this child of the Ji clan? Is there a terrifyingly powerful practitioner of the way of Immortal who, seeing the talent of this child, has decided to help him?" Ironwood Zhan was unable to flee, try as he might. He felt both frantic and terrified

"Waterflame Lotus!" Ning's gaze focused on him.

The enormous fire lotus petal appeared above Ironwood Zhan, while an enormous water lotus petal appeared beneath Ironwood Zhan. At the same time, the two slowly began to swivel.

"I don't know which elder is present?" Ironwood Zhan called out loudly, while revealing a Dao-seal in his hand. This Dao-seal transformed into an illusory diamond, then disappeared into his body, and his body began to glow with a faint golden light. "I am a disciple of the Ironwood clan, and I am on very good terms with Snowdragon Mountain as well."

"Stop struggling." The formerly distant Ning had already arrived.

"Child of the Ji clan." The golden light on Ironwood Zhan's body was trembling and swaying. He repeatedly, viciously twirled out the Blackwood Vinewhip in his hand, which quickly elongated as it flew

towards Ning.

Ning wielded a sword in each hand. He was as fast as lightning.

"Chi!" The Darknorth sword in his left hand utilized the 'Watertight' technique. As soon as the Blackwood Vinewhip touched the Darknorth sword, it naturally wrapped around it, but Ning voluntarily began spinning his left sword...the Blackwood Vinewhip wrapped around it many times, and in the end, Ning's left hand actually was able to snatch the Ironwood Vinewhip.

Swish !

Ning's right hand reached an even faster level.

"Break!" Zhan roared fiercely while pulling at the Blackwood Vinewhip, but he wasn't able to budget it at all. "No, I can't die here. I can't die to this little child of the Ji clan!" Sensing death draw nearer, Ironwood Zhan became even crazier. He even released the Ironwood Vinewhip in his hand.

Turning his head, he continued to flee!

"Bang !" Slowly being ground down by the Waterflame Lotus, the golden light on his body finally cracked and dispersed.

"Aaaah." Ironwood Zhan's clothes were instantly ground into dust by the Waterflame Lotus, revealing his body, which was beginning to turn black. He emitted an agonized scream.

"Swish !"

A raindrop pierced straight through Zhan's forehead.

And then, the Waterflame Lotus dissipated. Ning withdrew his sword, looking quietly at the charred Ironwood Zhan.

Ironwood Zhan's eyes were bulging. Even his eyebrows were gone, while in his forehead, there was a bloody hole. His eyes were filled

with disbelief and rage. He hadn't imagined that he would die at the hands of this youth. In his heart, he even more hated that 'elder' who had blocked his flight. If it hadn't been for that elder practitioner, he would have been able to flee.

"Immortal practitioner?" Ning said to himself softly, his heart filled with a silent excitement.

Finally!

He had finally become a Xiantian lifeform!

Even the world-famous, powerful expert, Ironwood Zhan, had died in the face of his might.

"Even though I was reincarnated into the mortal world!" Ning growled in his heart. "Relying on my own efforts, I was still able to become a Xiantian lifeform! And that was just the beginning! The beginning of myself, Ji Ning!"

The experiences of his past life. Everything he had seen in this one.

They had all allowed Ning to have a heart that was filled with an incomparable urge to grow stronger. An urge to control his own destiny. To not be controlled by others, to not be controlled by fate!

"This is just the start!" Ning took a few steps forward, walking to Zhan's corpse. With but a thought, a gust of flame instantly turned Zhan's corpse into nothing but ash, leaving behind only an armguard and that Blackwood Vinewhip.

"Oh?" The armguard and the whip both flew into Ning's hands. Ning inspected them carefully. "So this armguard is actually a storage-type magic treasure! The Blackwood Vinewhip is also a magic treasure."

"Hm." Ning returned.

He returned to the pool, collecting those eight Yin Yang Twin Energy

Formation flags. The flags were all very dark and grey, and yet they emitted pulses.

“Magic treasures, Dao-seals. All of them are only usable when one is at least at the Xiantian level as a Ki Refiner.” Ning collected all these things into his kalestone. “I first have to reach the Xiantian level as a Ki Refiner as well.”

Ning cleaned up the surrounding area. As for the corpses of the Bi'an Tiger and Ironwood Zhan, he transformed them all into ash. Ning then once again continued his meditations by the pool side, because he had the sense...that training his ki to the Xiantian level would be very easy!

The night after that battle!

Ning still sat in the lotus position by the side of the pool, and for the moment, the dantian in his body began to change and rumble! The original powerful threads of ki began to rotate and then condense into liquid drops. One drop of ki began to solidify, and Ning's body also began to attract some mist which wrapped around him.

“So I'm about to break through.” Ning smiled.

When he had been in the womb, his meridians had been damaged. If he had been relying on Ki Refining to reach the Xiantian level, it would have been very hard. But upon reaching the Xiantian level through the [Scarlet Diagram of the Ning Shining Heavens], Ning's entire body had been transformed into a true Fiendgod's body by the Lunar Truewater and Solar Truefire of the Solar Star [Sun] and the Lunar Star [Moon]. Because his entire body had been transformed, his mortal body had been transformed into a Fiendgod's body, and his meridians had been remade anew as well!

Currently, Ning's meridian network had become perfected and unblemished. The meridian channels were far wider than that of

most Xiantian Ki Refiners! In addition, Ning had a very high level of enlightenment, so naturally, he was now about to break through.

"The storage-type magic treasure." Ning held the armguard while activating the ki in his body. He quickly managed to bind it to him.

"Storage-type magic treasures and natural kalestones really are different." Ning instantly felt overjoyed. This armguard held an enormous storage space. Within an area of chaos, there was a storage area of tens of meters across. There were many items inside as well, such as clothes, food, gold, and other things.

The most valuable items were those eight Dao-seals! They had been slowly accumulated by Ironwood Zhan over many years. Today, he had used three of them in one breath, but he had still died in the end.

"A pity there are no other magic treasures." Ning shook his head. Still, this was as he had expected. A Xiantian lifeform was already quite lucky to have just two or three magic treasures.

"This bow is pretty good."

With a flip of his hand, Ning retrieved a simple, unadorned greatbow from within the storage-type magic treasure. "This should be the bow which Ironwood Zhan normally uses. After reaching the Xiantian level, I am in need of a good bow."

Hua !

As he applied force to it, the monstrous, Fiendgod-like power he possessed easily drew the bow.

"Good boy." Ning praised, then he took a good look at it. The bow had two things drawn on it that looked like characters; 'Jia Yong'. This name made Ning puzzled. "It should be the name of the bowyer who made this bow, I suppose."

"When I return to the West Prefecture City, I'll exchange this

Blackwood Vinewhip for another magic treasure.” Ji Ning collected everything, extremely happy. “Without experiencing the bone-freezing cold, how could one experience the fragrant scent of the flowers assailing the nose? Four years of training the sword. After training to now, I’ve broken through and am about to enter a brand new world. I suppose this counts as finally smelling the fragrant scent of the plum blossoms assailing the nose.”

This breakthrough resulted in him reaching the Xiantian level in both ki and as a Fiendgod.

Even his soul had reached the ‘divine will’ level.

And the hint of understanding regarding the true Dao which he had gained by the side of the pool had allowed him to develop an ultimate attack, the ‘Waterflame Lotus’.

“Oh, right, and there’s that!” Ning took a breath, letting himself calm down. As he did, with great solemnity, he took out the book his mother had given him, the most precious secret manual his mother possessed, which she had forbidden him to teach to any other members of the Ji clan. She had told him that he was only to use it upon reaching the Xiantian level.

Ning carefully looked at the golden cover of the book, and those four characters on the cover: [Wind Wing Evasion Technique]!

And then, Ning opened the book and began to read.

Chapter 6 – The Return

“Windwing Evasion is the root and foundation for our Yuchi clan. It is not to be transmitted to outsiders!”

Upon opening the gold-leaf pages, this was the very first line of characters, which caused Ji Ning to be stunned. The Yuchi clan? His mother was Yuchi Snow. Could this mean that his mother belonged to the Yuchi clan? In this wide land, those who were born into poor circumstances and didn't have a good clan name would just randomly pick names for themselves, such as 'Blacktooth', 'Blackstone', 'Ironhead', etc. Generally speaking, only large-scale clans had proper surnames!

“Mother has never mentioned the Yuchi clan to me.” Ning said to himself. “I am Mother's child, and I can thus be considered to have the blood of the Yuchi clan in my veins. But strictly speaking, I am only half a Yuchi clan member. And yet, Mother still taught this to me. However, from my birth until today, I have never heard of a Yuchi clan.”

The number of books Ning had read could only be described as 'many!' But the books had no records of a Yuchi clan, which meant that the Yuchi clan was not a clan from the surrounding area.

That made sense...

Mother and Father had met in the distant Dark North Seas, and then they had gone adventuring together.

“I've never heard Mother discuss the Yuchi clan. Perhaps Mother left the clan, or perhaps the Yuchi clan collapsed? Forget it, it doesn't matter right now.” Ning lowered his head, continuing to read. This book explained in detail the history of the [Windwing Evasion] technique.

The ancestor of the Yuchi clan, Yuchi Anton, was born a slave.

Once, when hunting on a mountain, he had rescued a heavily injured child. He had worked hard to take care of this child, and the child slowly recovered. Only after half a year did the child reveal his true identity...as it turned out, this person who had appeared to be a child was, in reality, a Celestial Immortal who had trained for countless years and had long since escaped the Three Realms. This time, he had encountered a great disaster, and thus he had used all his abilities in order to flee to this mountain, but by then, he had become powerless. If he had ran into an ordinary little monstrous beast, he probably would have been eaten.

This child had named himself Suhuan, and claimed that he had already become an Immortal in the Fiendgod Era.

And then, this Immortal named Suhuan had taught Anton training methods. Who would have thought that Anton was actually more talented in Fiendgod Body Refining methods...Suhuan had stayed by Anton's side for fully a hundred years, carefully teaching him, while at the same time transmitting to him a divine ability, the [Windwing Evasion]. And then, Suhuan had said, "Our karmic destiny has come to its end. I hope you will shape up!"

And then, he had flown away.

"Celestial Immortal?" Ning was shocked. "Divine ability?"

This...this....

Even in the Netherworld Kingdom, according to what the Lord of Cui Manor had said the celestial soldiers and generals of the Heaven Realm, after acquiring the likes of the [Nuwa Painting] visualization technique, would have to experience countless tribulations before becoming a Celestial Immortal! In the Grand Xia Dynasty, perhaps a million years would pass without a single Celestial Immortal being born. They truly were creatures who had transcended the Three Realms, who were no longer bound by the restrictions of the

Netherworld Kingdom or of the Heavenly Court. They were Immortals who did as they pleased.

"Who would have thought that the ancestor of Mother's Yuchi clan would have had a history like this." Ning felt shaken. "This history is far more incredible than our Ji clan's."

"In addition, the [Windwing Evasion] is a divine ability!"

Ning couldn't breathe.

What was a 'divine ability'?

Some of the more famous divine abilities, included the 'Kuafu Sunchaser', '72 Transformations', 'Three Heads, Six Arms', 'Houyi Shooting the Sun'. These were the natural abilities which the ancient, mighty Fiendgods had developed. Only these abilities could be described as 'divine abilities'! Only Fiendgod Body Refiners could train in them, and only upon reaching the Zifu level could they begin their training!

Every single 'divine ability' was incomparably precious. Many Fiendgod Body Refiners, upon reaching the Zifu Disciple level, were clearly capable of learning divine abilities, but they didn't have any chance to do so.

"Divine abilities should only be usable at the Zifu stage. But Mother instructed me to begin learning at the Xiantian stage. Why is that?" Ning continued to read the detailed information regarding the training methods for the [Windwing Evasion].

Hua!

Flipping through the golden pages, another golden page appeared before him, but clearly, this golden page was somewhat different from the previous pages. This golden page still had a hint of stellar light glowing from it, and there was a diagram engraved at the top of it. It was that of a giant Roc in flight.

At times, it stretched its wings. At times, it sank down. At times, it flew throughout the Nine Heavens. At times, it sank into the seas. At times, it landed on the ground. At times, it burrowed deep into the earth...

Ning couldn't help but feel affected by this diagram. It was as though he had seen an enormous Roc in flight. In addition, the great Roc in this diagram was covered by countless specks of stellar light, and these specks of stellar light...seemed like the divine power flowing through the critical parts of the great Roc's body.

The spots of light seemed to be focused on a pair of wings.

"The great Roc spreads his wings, and travels a hundred thousand kilometers as it flies!"

"This is what Master Suhuan told to me. Unfortunately, I am far too distant from that level. The descendants of my Yuchi clan must focus on training in this [Windwing Evasion] technique. I hope that one day, one of them will be able to reach the highest 'divine ability' level. The eighty one Roc diagrams of the [Windwing Evasion] has profound secrets hidden within it. It must be meditated upon! The benefits to it are boundless!"

"The [Windwing Evasion] is divided into multiple layers and levels. Once the divine power in one's body reaches the level of being able to condense into a pair of wings, only then can one be considered to have developed a 'divine ability'. However, the [Windwing Evasion] remains a divine technique, and it would be jealously desired by some extremely powerful tribes of the Grand Xia Dynasty. The descendants of my clan absolutely must use wing-type magic treasures alongside this divine ability. Thus, not only can they rely on the power of the magic treasures to fly even faster, they can also prevent others from knowing of the existence of this divine ability..."

Ning closed the book.

Only after a long time was he able to calm down.

"My mother truly does have an extraordinary background." Ning frowned. "But clearly, although each page of this book is golden, the paper of those eighty one Roc diagrams are different from that of the other pages. In addition, such miraculous diagrams were most likely left behind by that Immortal, Suhuan, himself."

"Immortal Suhuan, despite teaching the [Windwing Evasion], most likely only left a single copy. In other words, the Yuchi clan should only have a single secret manual!" Ning hypothesized.

Although this was his first time viewing the eighty one Roc diagrams, Ning felt extremely certain that these eighty one Roc diagrams did indeed contain boundless secrets. It was the same feeling he had when he was gaining insights into the Dao...the feeling of immeasurably deep secrets. Most likely, only a person who had reached the highest levels of training in this divine ability was able to carve and draw them down.

"Ancestor Yuchi only had a single copy of this secret manual, but my mother is in possession of it." Ning pondered. "Can it be that the Yuchi clan was destroyed? Or was there another reason?"

Although he felt somewhat worried for his mother's relatives, he had never had any attachments to the Yuchi clan, and so Ning quickly stopped thinking about it.

"I need to carefully meditate on this."

The moon hanging high above him, Ning quietly sat down by the side of the pond, flipping through and looking at the Roc diagrams.

The [Windwing Evasion] was divided into many different levels.

Only after one's divine power was able to form wings could one be considered to have developed a divine ability. However, the requirements for divine power were very high; only a Zifu Disciple was capable of it.

"My mother had me begin to read it at the Xiantian level." Ning

laughed. "Although I'm not able to use divine power to form wings, the eighty one Roc diagrams contain boundless, endless secrets and mysteries. After I gain insight into them, it will still be very beneficial to my body."

Ning had already gained a hint of the true meaning of the Dao.

The higher one's level of enlightenment was, the more easily one would be able to tell that the eighty one Roc diagrams contained boundless truths, and even more infinite mysteries. Naturally, he would meditate on them intensively.

Time passed.

The Golden Crow fell. The Moon Rabbit rose.

One day passed after another. Ning remained within that mountain forest, completely focused on the [Windwing Evasion]. His body flashed through the mountain forests time and time again, and his movements took him farther and farther each time, at faster and faster speeds, with greater ease each time.

"I've already trained here for over a month." Ning suddenly came to his senses as he stared at the sun in the sky. "If I don't go back, most likely Autumn Leaf and the others will frantically report back to West Prefecture City."

"Time to go back."

Ning revealed a smile on his face. Turning to glance at the surrounding area, he saw that the pool was as calm as ever, and the aquatic grass in the pool still continued to slowly drift about.

"In the past month or so, I've improved dramatically." Ning felt incomparably delighted. Whether in Ki, as a Fiendgod, his soul, or even his newly learned divine ability, the [Windwing Evasion], he had improved greatly.

"Time to go."

Ning instantly leapt up.

Swoosh!

Like a blurry image, or like a bird in flight, he instantly flew over a kilometer away. His speed was now faster than when Ironwood Zhan had simultaneously used the 'Light Body Seal' and the 'Divine Movement Seal'.

.....

In a desolate tribe within the wilderness, there were many overturned stone rooms. The tribe was in a state of desolation. Clearly, the tribesmen had all departed long ago. This was an abandoned place.

But at the edges of the tribe, there were a few dozen stone houses that were absolutely spotless, where a group of black armored guards were gathered together.

Autumn Leaf was seated on a stone bench, quietly staring into the distance while waiting.

Previously, due to the appearance of the Diremonster, Serpentwing, at Serpentwing Lake, Ji Ning had immediately led Autumn Leaf and Mowu out of the Metalstone Tribue...but after the Serpentwing event had died down, Ning had permitted Autumn Leaf and Mowu to temporarily stay here with these black armored guards.

The territory which the Ji clan ruled over was simply too vast.

Thus, they had squads of black armored guards scattered throughout their domain. Whenever they were needed, they could immediately congregate while shocking and overawing countless tribes.

"Young master." Autumn Leaf stood up in surprised delight.

Those black armored guards and Mowu also turned to look. They saw from the distance a blurry figure appeared in a flash within those ruined tribal houses, then smile and walk towards them.

"Huh?" Autumn Leaf was slightly startled. She could tell that her young master, who was walking towards her from afar, was somewhat different. His entire body seemed to radiate a familiar aura, as though the essence of the heavens and the earth were within him! But of course, only she, who had been by Ning's side since he was young, was able to notice many of these little qualitative changes in Ning.

"Young master." Mowu stepped forward to pay his respects.

"Young master." The nearby group of black armored guards all fell to one knee.

"Make your preparations. It is time for me to head back." Ji Ning laughed as he spoke.

Autumn Leaf was startled. "Go? Go back?"

"First to Serpentwing Lake." Ning's eyes had a hint of anticipation flash through them. On this adventuring trip, he had decided long ago that upon breaking through and becoming a Xiantian lifeform, he would go deal with Serpentwing. Although Serpentwing had currently broken through to the peak Xiantian level, Ning was still completely confident.

"Young master, you..." Autumn Leaf revealed a look of surprise and delight. Naturally, she knew that Ning planned to go deal with Serpentwing as soon as he broke through to the Xiantian lifeform level.

"Right." Ning nodded.

Autumn Leaf was extremely cautious. She didn't say anything, only nodded repeatedly. "Mowu, hurry, gather our things. We're heading out."

Moments later.

Ning, Autumn Leaf, and Mowu, riding three black beasts, departed this ruined tribe.

Chapter 7 - Blacktooth Tribe

On the desolate grasslands, three black beasts were galloping at high speed. Ning and the others had looks of irrepressible joy on their faces. No matter what, they were finally coming home from the border region of Eastmount Marsh. They drew closer and closer to West Prefecture city.

"Young Master." Autumn Leaf called out.

"Hm?" Ji Ning looked towards her.

Autumn Leaf hurriedly said, "On this trip to Serpentwing Lake, we'll pass by Spring Grass' Blacktooth Tribe. How about let's go visit her at the Blacktooth Tribe? It has been a long time since I've seen her. I miss her very much."

"Spring Grass?" Ning was startled, and in his heart, a surge of longing arose as well. Autumn Leaf and Spring Grass had accompanied him ever since he was young. They were like sisters to him. Originally, despite being unwilling to part from her, he didn't want to cause Spring Grass to feel sorrow, which was why he permitted her to be with her father again. Now that Spring Grass was suddenly mentioned, Ning couldn't help but feel a hint of excitement as well as anticipation. "Alright. Let's go pay a visit on the way."

"Thank you, young master." Autumn Leaf hurriedly said with gratitude.

"I want to go as well." Ning smiled, and as he did, he slapped the black beast on its head, ordering it to change directions slightly.

Although in theory they were paying a visit to the Blacktooth Tribe 'enroute' to Serpentwing Lake, in truth, it was still something of a long detour.

In a rather open mountain cave below a mountain wall, with many large wooden fences nearby. There were some armors hung up in the mouth of the cave, while there were also some long-furred beasts strung up on the trees. Some powerfully built men, their upper bodies bare, were casually chatting while seated, roasting the flesh of a beast.

At the cave entrance, ten black armored guards were on watch.

"Someone is coming." One of the black armored guards called out loudly, and those men who were eating turned to look. One of them, a bare-chested man, stood up and walked over, frowning slightly as he looked over.

Three figures made their way over at high speed from within the mountain forests. Seeing that it was three people riding black beasts, they immediately relaxed.

The bare-chested man's face immediately changed, and he hurriedly called out, "The young master has arrived, so why haven't you paid your respects yet? Quick quick quick, all of you, rise!" After speaking, he immediately rushed forward, coming down to one knee at the entrance. Very respectfully, he called out, "Young master!"

Both the armored men as well as the men with bared chests all came over and knelt down while calling out, "Young master."

"Rise." With a flip, Ning descended from the black beast, laughing at the leader of these black armored guards. "You've met me before?" He had been preparing to take out his insignia just now.

"I, Wuzhan, was lucky in the past." The heroic figure had a scarred face, and his body was powerfully built. "Young master, in the past, when you sparred with Ninefang Warriors, I once sparred with you, young master. Thus, I was instantly able to recognize you, young master. Behind you should be that Miss Autumn Leaf, your maidservant, young master. I recognize her as well."

Ning laughed.

So that was the reason why. In the past, he often sparred with Ninefang Warriors, and many of the Ninefang Warriors of the black armored guards had sparred with him. It wasn't strange for him to meet one of them stationed outside.

"I need to ask you about something," Ning said. "It has to do with Serpentwing Lake. Come. Let's talk inside."

"Yes." This Captain Wuzhan immediately said. "Young master, please come with me."

Wuzhan guided Ning inside, towards a spacious stone room.

"A while ago, Serpentwing ran amok not too far from us. Even we suffered some repercussions." Wuzhan let out a laughing breath. At this time, another black armored guard came over with a plate of fruits. Ning casually picked up a fruit and took two bites. "He even came to your place?"

"No. If he had, we'd have been dead for sure." Wuzhan shook his head. "However, at the time, we were all terrified. In the face of Serpentwing, we black armored guards wouldn't be able to fight back at all. Although we managed to avoid that calamity, many tribes suffered disasters. I can only use the word 'miserable' to describe what happened to them! At that time, we were hoping that Serpentwing would be executed by our Ji clan, but unfortunately..."

Ning nodded.

In the end, Poisdove Ridge had interceded and engaged in negotiations with the Ji clan, with the result being that Serpentwing only had to be confined within Serpentwing Lake for a century.

"Has Serpentwing been in Serpentwing Lake the entire time?" Ning asked. "Also, is he at the bottom of Serpentwing Lake, or in the central island?"

"The bottom of the lake, of course." Wuzhan said hurriedly. "How could he dare to stay on the island? He is afraid that our Ji clan will act against him."

"Bottom of the lake?" Ning seemed to have thought of something.

It seemed that it wouldn't be so easy for him to kill Serpentwing.

"Wuzhan." Ning asked. "Do you know of a tribe known as the Blacktooth Tribe?"

"Blacktooth Tribe?" Wuzhan nodded. "I know them, of course I know them. The leader of the Blacktooth Tribe is a very skillful man. He was able to found a new tribe. No ordinary person is capable of founding a new tribe. Unfortunately, the many tribes which Serpentwing harmed had the Blacktooth Tribe amongst their number."

"What!" Ning's face changed dramatically. His heart shuddered.

Could it be...

Based on what he knew, originally, even before Serpentwing attacked him, Serpentwing had destroyed a small tribe. Everyone in the tribe had died. In the end, it was only through the examination of the corpses of those poor victims that it was determined that Serpentwing was the killer.

"Does the Blacktooth Tribe still exist?" Ning asked hurriedly.

"It does." Wuzhan nodded. "This time, Serpentwing caused disaster everywhere. He'd go to a tribe, engage in some slaughter, then leave! It didn't try to wipe out everyone! After all, to exterminate an entire tribe would take more time and make it easier for our Ji clan's Xiantian lifeforms to catch up. But although the Blacktooth Tribe wasn't wiped out, more than half of its tribesmen died. It really is terrible."

"Over half?" Ning's heart began to clench.

"Do you know Spring Grass?" Ning hurriedly asked. "My maidservant, Spring Grass. Is she still alive?"

"Spring Grass?" Wuzhan said questioningly. "I know Spring Grass. You have two maidservants, young master. Can it be that Spring Grass is no longer following you, young master?"

Ning had released Spring Grass to her freedom, but very few people knew this.

"No. I granted her freedom. She is the daughter of the chief of the Blacktooth Tribe." Ning said hurriedly.

"I don't know about this." Wuzhan shook his head. "Although I've seen Blacktooth, I don't know anything about his daughter."

Ning took a deep breath.

Worry!

Concern!

More than half the people of the Blacktooth Tribe had died. Too many had died. Perhaps Spring Grass was amongst them.

"Definitely, she definitely has to be alright." Ning ground his teeth, then immediately left the stone room.

Outside, Autumn Leaf and Mowu were currently seated in a circle with the black armored guards, enjoying some roast meat.

"Young master." Autumn Leaf and Mowu both turned to look.

"Let's go." Ning hurriedly shouted.

Autumn Leaf and Mowu's gazes were filled with puzzlement. Why were they leaving in such a hurry? However, they didn't dare ask too much. They hurriedly rose, no longer eating as they headed towards their black beasts.

"To the Blacktooth Tribe." Ning's face was gloomy. Kicking the waist of the black beast, he immediately sent it bounding forward.

The three black beasts quickly charged into the distant mountain forests.

"Captain, what happened?" The other black armored guards were extremely puzzled. As for Wuzhan, as he walked out of the stone room, he too frowned as he stared into the distance. "Spring Grass? The daughter of the chief of the Blacktooth Tribe?"

Ning's heart was blazing with worry. Autumn Leaf and Spring Grass, although nominally his servants, were in truth like big sisters to him. He still remembered how when he was young, he would point at the words on the books and stammer out questions. At that time, Spring Grass and Autumn Leaf, despite being 'tormented' by their young master, could only obediently reply.

"No way."

"No way she's dead." Ning was extremely worried.

"Young master." Autumn Leaf asked with concern. "What's wrong?" She could tell that her young master's face was exceedingly ugly right now. She rarely saw her young master look so furious.

Ning shouted, "The Blacktooth Tribe suffered an attack by Serpentwing. More than half its tribesmen died."

"Ah?!" Autumn Leaf was instantly shocked. "Then Spring Grass..."

"We'll know once we get there." Ning shouted back coldly.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The three black beasts moved at high speed. By the time the sun was beginning to set, the three black beasts arrived at a sparsely

covered mountain forest. From the distance, they could faintly see a tribe.

"Halt." Ning shouted.

The three beasts quickly came to a halt.

"Young master?" Autumn Leaf's face was red with worry as well.

"Go over there." Ning pointed into the distance. From the distance, dozens of fur-clad men were currently chopping down trees using hatchets. They were most likely collecting firewood.

"They should be the clansmen of the Blacktooth Tribe. If we ask them, we'll know." Ning immediately rode his black beast over, with Autumn Leaf and Mowu following from behind.

Soon.

Ning arrived in front of those dozens of fur-clad woodcutters. These men all raised their spears and sabers, carefully watching them approach.

"I have a question for you." With a flip of his hand, Ning immediately brought out his insignia, which had a single character on it; 'Ji'.

"Ji clan?"

These tribesmen were all shocked.

"Does your tribe had a person named Spring Grass? She is the daughter of your chief." Ning barked.

"The chief's daughter?" A one-eyed man hurriedly said. "Our Blacktooth Tribe doesn't have anyone known as Spring Grass. Our chief's daughter is named Miwa!"

Ning was startled, then he hurriedly said, "Right, her name is Miwa. Is she still alive?"

"Dead."

"Miwa's dead." The tribesmen all said.

Ning's face changed dramatically, and the face of the nearby Autumn Leaf turned utterly white. Her body swayed, and then she collapsed from her black beast. Mowu hurriedly leapt off of his own black beast and caught Autumn Leaf. Autumn Leaf's face was pale and utterly without color. Her tears had already begun to flow down uncontrollably.

"How did she die?" Ning shouted. "Was it Serpentwing who killed her?"

"Serpentwing killed many of the tribesmen of our tribe. Even one of the chief's son died." The one-eyed man said. "Many of our tribesmen died right away, while a few others suffered from shrapnel from exploding rocks which smashed into their body, or were frozen...they didn't die right away, but they were injured. Afterwards, their wounds festered, while others became extremely ill. All of them held on, but eventually died. Many badly injured tribesmen died like that. Miwa, as well, died of illness afterwards."

"Spring Grass!" Autumn Leaf wailed.

Ning's face became all the more terrible, and the mental waves generated by his violent thoughts caused the nearby trees to begin to shake and vibrate.

"Serpentwing!" Ning ground his teeth and howled, "I, Ji Ning, so swear that I will definitely kill you! I will definitely kill you!!!"

Chapter 8 – Spring Grass

The dozens of tribesmen looked at this youth, feeling a sudden terror. They felt as though the entire world around them was shaking.

Kill Serpentwing?

The youth in front of them was going to kill Serpentwing?

"You didn't lie to me." Ji Ning swept this group of tribesmen with his gaze. "Miwa truly died?"

"Why would we lie? The entire Blacktooth Tribe knows this." The group of experts were filled with terror and panic. Whether it was due to this youth's aura or the 'Ji' insignia he held, they were in terror of him.

"Let's go."

Ning mounted his black beast and began to head straight into the distant Blacktooth Tribe.

Autumn Leaf and Mowu mounted their own black beasts and followed.

There were more than ten tribal warriors standing guard on the two archer towers on each side of the fence gate.

"Outsiders, halt." A warrior immediately shouted angrily.

His face sunken, Ning took out his insignia and shouted back, "Tell Blacktooth to come see me!"

Upon seeing the insignia, the warrior above were terrified and quickly called out, "Please wait, I'll go inform the chief right away." As he spoke, the warrior jumped down directly to the ground, then

began to fly towards the tribe. In but a few moments, a black fur clad, scarred man ran in their direction, under escort of a number of warriors. It was the chief of the Blacktooth Tribe, Chief Blacktooth.

When he saw the three figures mounted on black beasts, especially the leader, his body suddenly trembled. He immediately howled, "Quick, open the gate and welcome the young master of the Ji clan!"

"Young master of the Ji clan?" The people of a small clan like the Blacktooth Tribe naturally were shocked. They hurriedly began to open the heavy gate.

Blacktooth was the first to fall to his knees. "Blacktooth pays his respect to you, young master."

The other tribal warriors all knelt down as well.

"To your residence." Ning remained on his black beast as he gave the instruction.

"Yes." Blacktooth quickly led the way up ahead.

Ning looked at Blacktooth. He couldn't help but feel a hint of hatred in his heart! He knew that Spring Grass' death couldn't be blamed on Blacktooth, and he believed that Blacktooth was heartbroken as well. But Ning couldn't help but feel hatred and pain...originally, when he had given Spring Grass into her father's care, he had never imagined that she would die, just like this. If Spring Grass had remained by his side...

Ning's left hand couldn't help but clench into a fist. Even his knuckles were turning white.

"Young master, this is my residence." Blacktooth arrived at one of larger stone houses of the tribe. There were two women and a young child at the doorway. These two women and the child were clearly cautious and uneasy.

"He is?" Ning looked at the young child. This child looked very similar

to Spring Grass...causing a pang in Ning's heart.

"My son." Blacktooth said respectfully, while at the same time, barking to his women and his son, "Why haven't you left yet?"

The two women and the child immediately left.

"Speak inside. Mowu, you stand guard at the doorway. Don't let anyone in." Ning immediately dismounted his black beast and led Autumn Leaf into the house. Blacktooth, terrified, followed him in.

Within the room.

Ning looked at Blacktooth, sitting down on a stone chair and saying coldly, "Blacktooth, when I gave Spring Grass into your care, my hope was that the two of you, father and daughter, would be reunited and live a good life! But why is it that I didn't see Spring Grass upon entering the tribe?"

Blacktooth hurriedly said, "Young master, right now, Spring Grass isn't within the tribe!"

"Not within the tribe?" Ning frowned as he stared accusingly at Blacktooth. Blacktooth still wanted to lie about it?

"Soon after Spring Grass returned to the tribe, she encountered a young travelling merchant whom she took a liking to. I knew that travelling merchant, so I had faith in him." Blacktooth said in a very practiced manner. "When one's daughter grows up, she will have to get married. Thus, I had my daughter marry this travelling merchant. Before Spring Grass left with this travelling merchant...she left a letter for you, young master."

Before this last sentence, Ning was beginning to grow truly angry as he listened. Blacktooth, you dare deceive me! But upon hearing this last sentence, Ning said softly, "Letter?"

"I'll get it now." Blacktooth hurriedly ran into a nearby room.

"Young master?" Autumn Leaf looked at Ning.

Ning said softly, "Don't be impatient."

Ning's intelligence wasn't low. He wasn't an idiot who only knew how to train. From the intelligence he had gathered....there was no question that Spring Grass had died! First of all, all of the people outside the tribe were in total agreement, and they even said that Ning could ask anyone in the tribe and would still get this answer.

There was no reason for that group of people to deceive him.

Also...after having been separated from her father for so long, Spring Grass had wanted to be with him so much that she had even left Ning! How could she immediately get married and leave not long after reuniting with her father?

"Young master, this is the letter Spring Grass left for you." Blacktooth held a white beast skin parchment and handed it over.

Ning took a deep breath. Letter? This was most likely her will. The will which Spring Grass had intentionally left behind amidst her grave illness...Ning stretched out his trembling hand and accepted the white beast skin, opening it and reading carefully.

Those graceful characters appeared. These characters were very familiar to him. Upon seeing them, Ning's heart instantly shook. It was Spring Grass' handwriting!

"Young master, after returning to the tribe, I was truly very happy, very happy. I saw my father, and I even have two little brothers...I feel as though I did when I was a child, when I was with my parents...."

This is what the letter said.

The letter included all of the joy which Spring Grass had felt. Ning

could sense the joy emanating from these words. Spring Grass truly had been happy when she returned to the tribe.

"Two little brothers?" Ning had a thought. Previously, he had only seen a single son of Blacktooth's, while previously the clansman had said...when Serpentwing had run amok, more than half of the Blacktooth Tribe had died, including the son of the chief.

Ning continued to read.

"I met him."

"Every single woman has a man who is destined for her. As soon as I saw him, I knew that he was the one. When I see him smile, I feel happy. When I see him frown, I worry. When I see him training hard with the sword, I stand there and watch. Just looking at him is a gift given by heaven. Thus, I decided...to marry him!"

Ning clearly saw that there was a splotch here, as though left behind by a tear.

Ning's heart shook.

Marry?

Was the man which Spring Grass spoke of actually himself? *As soon as I saw him, I knew that he was the one. When I see him smile, I feel happy. When I see him frown, I worry. When I see him training hard with the sword, I stand there and watch....*

If you wanted to marry me, why didn't you say it to me yourself?

Ning shut his eyes, unable to prevent the tears from flowing down.

Although Spring Grass was only a maidservant, most of the men in this area would marry quite a few women. In his previous life, Ning hadn't loved any woman. In this life, he had quickly become accustomed to this culture. Even if he truly married several women, that wouldn't be a big deal. But they had to be women which he

dearly loved.

Ning would have been willing to nod and agree to letting Spring Grass become his woman.

"Young master!" The nearby Autumn Leaf saw that Ning was shedding tears. Her heart couldn't help but clench. She had been a maidservant since she was young. Naturally, she wouldn't read a letter while Ning was reading it. But when she saw Ning cry... Autumn Leaf's heart became panicked.

Ning opened his eyes.

He continued to read.

"Young master, if you can see this letter, that means you came to the Blacktooth Tribe to see me."

"I really am very happy, very happy. Spring Grass is just a maidservant. For you, young master, to come to the Blacktooth Tribe to visit Spring Grass means at least...Spring Grass has a small place of her own in your heart, young master...Spring Grass is very happy, very happy, truly, very happy."

The letter concluded here.

Ning's eyes were wet.

Very happy?

Are you truly very happy?

"Hahaha." Ning laughed loudly. His laugh was so sorrowful. This was someone who had been with him his entire life, like family.

"Young master." Autumn Leaf was worried.

"Young master." Blacktooth was terrified and uneasy as well.

Ning turned to stare at Blacktooth, his eyes as sharp as swords. He

growled, "Blacktooth, you still want to try and deceive me? Speak, tell me, tell me everything!!!"

Upon hearing this, Blacktooth's face changed dramatically. And then his body began to tremble.

Thud!

Blacktooth's knees hit the ground. His entire body shook in agony, and for a long time, he let out a desolate, heartbroken cry.

"Miwaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!"

Chapter 9 – Riverside Tribe

A grief that had been suppressed for so long but which was given sudden release....how powerful it was! Ji Ning stood there quietly, looking at the agonized Blacktooth, not saying a single word.

"Since you already know, young master, then I won't lie any more. Young master, come with me." Blacktooth rose and walked out of the room.

Ning and Autumn Leaf followed behind him.

Blacktooth led the way in front, all the way towards the very back of the tribe. In the very back of the tribe, there was a small door in the wooden fence. Through the wooden door...there was a cemetery far past it. Many of the erected tombs were newly made. Clearly, this was a freshly built cemetery.

"Young master?" Autumn Leaf looked towards Ning, her eyes filled with a hint of unease.

Ning held his breath as well. He understood where Blacktooth was taking him.

"Right here." Blacktooth pointed at a seemingly ordinary grave. In front of this grave, there was a large stone, which had just a few words carved into it: *'Daughter, Miwa. Erected by Father, Blacktooth.'*

"Spring Grass." Ning quietly stood there, looking at the grave.

In his life, he had rarely experienced the sensation of heartbreak. Compared to those strong, powerful emotions, Ning preferred calm, quiet, warm emotions. The feeling of seeing someone every morning, and affection for each other slowly growing deeper.

Calm and peaceful was real!

To treat someone as part of your own life. At least in this life, from

when he was an infant until now, the amount of time Spring Grass had spent with him was most likely even greater than his parents had. Ning hadn't realized it when she was alive, but now that he knew she was dead, he felt as though a piece of his heart had been chopped off.

It hurt very much!

"Blacktooth." Ning stood there, looking at the tombstone. Slowly, he said, "Tell me everything. Tell me everything which happened after Spring Grass returned."

Blacktooth nodded.

"At first, on the way back, she was actually quite sad. Sad that she had to part with you, young master." Blacktooth sighed. "But after she arrived at the tribe and saw her two brothers, Miwa clearly became much happier. She'd often spend time with her two little brothers...the days passed in happiness, and at that time, Miwa had looked forward to young master one day coming to visit her."

"Only!"

Blacktooth's voice sunk. "One day, Serpentwing arrived. It was like a nightmare, causing countless members of our tribe to die, one of which was my son, Waterfront."

"The death of Waterfront, her little brother, hurt Miwa very much."

Ning remembered that beast skin letter which discussed some of the events Miwa had experienced upon returning to the Blacktooth Tribe. Many were stories regarding her and her two little brothers. Clearly, Miwa truly doted on her two little brothers. This caused Ning to quietly come to the decision that he would have to help out Spring Grass' sole surviving brother, as a way to help console Miwa's soul in heaven.

"Serpentwing's attack caused the entire Blacktooth Tribe to fall into an abyss of fear and pain! The tribesmen were afraid, afraid that

Serpentwing could attack again. Some of the tribesmen even fled the tribe and joined other, larger tribes."

"Everyone in the tribe was in a state of panic." Blacktooth continued, "Many tribesmen would leave. Actually, after Serpentwing's attack, our tribe's population became less than a thousand. With so many tribesmen fleeing...if this continued, the Blacktooth Tribe would have fallen apart soon."

Ning nodded.

"I had undergone countless difficulties in order to build the tribe. Naturally, I didn't want it to fall apart just like that." Blacktooth said. "Spring Grass felt sympathy for me, so she put down her embarrassment and wrote a letter and asked the tribesmen to deliver it to West Prefecture City to give it to you, young master. She wanted to ask you, young master, to help my Blacktooth Tribe."

"Only, we quickly received the news that you, young master, were out adventuring." Blacktooth shook his head.

Ning ground his teeth.

Right.

He had gone adventuring long before Serpentwing had reached the peak of the Xiantian stage. Naturally, they wouldn't have been able to find him.

"The tribesmen suggested that our Blacktooth Tribe should consider go asking for the protection of that extremely large tribe, the 'Riverside Tribe'." Blacktooth said in a dark voice. "As long as we could receive the protection of the Riverside Tribe and be permitted to temporarily reside within Riverside City, everything would be fine."

"Riverside City?" Ning murmured to himself.

As one of the hegemons of the Swallow Mountain area, the Ji clan naturally had to control the many tribes within this territory. No

tribe's population was permitted to expand beyond fifty thousand! Once they expanded beyond fifty thousand, they might become a threat to the Ji clan's rule. Thus, if that happened, the Ji clan would definitely use some brutal, ruthless methods to overawe the surrounding tribes.

Thus, a fifty thousand man tribe was considered an extremely large tribe. The Riverside Tribe was one such tribe! Because the tribe was large, the walls of the tribe were made from enormous rocks, like a small city. Although it couldn't compare to a large city like the West Prefecture City which held hundreds of thousands of citizens, it was still an extremely powerful tribe amongst the countless tribes.

Generally speaking, tribes that were able to erect such a city had a Xiantian lifeform guarding them.

"Riverside City had two powerful Xiantian lifeforms. Diremonsters wouldn't dare go there." Blacktooth said. "Our Blacktooth Tribe only had a few hundred people. As long as we could enter Riverside City! Once Serpentwing was dealt with, everything would then return to normal."

"We went to pay our respects to a powerful figure within Riverside City, River He, and offered treasures, wanting him to accept our Blacktooth Tribe hide within for a time." Blacktooth ground his teeth. "But that River He was very picky. He didn't have any interest in those treasures we offered. But he took an interest in Miwa."

"He wanted Miwa to become his woman, and in exchange, he would help the Blacktooth Tribe this time. You know how haughty Miwa is. Of course she didn't accept. She immediately left!" A ferocious look flashed through Blacktooth's eyes. "That River He actually sent his subordinates to go capture Miwa, wanting to forcibly take her back."

"However, Miwa was very powerful, and she used very high class sword techniques as well. She beat Jiang He's servants half to death...Miwa had also said at the time, 'My master is the young master of the Ji clan. Jiang He, don't go too far!'"

"That Jiang He just laughed loudly and said, 'Even if you are the maidservant of young master Ji, you are just a female servant. If you were able to successfully ask your young master for help, then you wouldn't come here asking me for help. What's more, how could the maidservant of a young master of the Ji clan end up in such a small tribe?'" Blacktooth ground his teeth. "This Jiang He added another sentence...'If you become my woman, I will protect the Blacktooth Tribe! Otherwise, just wait for death.' After this, we left Riverside City."

Autumn Leaf, hearing this, was enraged. "How could Sister Spring Grass possibly agree to him!"

"Spring Grass wouldn't agree." Ning shook his head while looking at Blacktooth.

"Right. Spring Grass was completely unwilling." Blacktooth shook his head in pain. "But seeing how panicked the tribesmen were and how members of the tribe often fled, and seeing how agonized I was....for the sake of me, her father, after agonizing for three days, she still agreed."

"How could Sister Spring Grass be so stupid!!!" Autumn Leaf was frantic.

Ning shut his eyes.

He could imagine the mental struggle which Spring Grass had gone through during those three days. For the sake of her father, was it worth it?

"Miwa became River He's woman." Blacktooth's voice was trembling slightly. "But when Miwa was completely unprepared, River He suddenly launched a sneak attack, smashing Miwa's dantian with a palm strike and dispersing all of the ki in her body while mocking her....You stupid woman, there are countless tribes which want to be protected by my Riverside Tribe. Just because you became my woman, I have to help you? Hahaha, what a dreamer!"

"Detestable!!!" Autumn Leaf was so angry that she was shaking.

Ning ground his teeth.

Spring Grass. Oh, Spring Grass!

Why did you trust that bastard? Why did you have to sacrifice yourself for your father? Why?

"The Serpentwing affair quickly calmed down. The Ji clan imprisoned Serpentwing within Serpentwing Lake, causing Serpentwing to not dare to come out at all." Blacktooth said. "Once this news came out from the Ji clan, all the tribes quickly settled down. The hearts of our Blacktooth Tribe's tribesmen calmed down as well, and some of the tribesmen who had fled actually returned."

"I was worried about Miwa, so I went to look for her." Blacktooth said in a low voice. "Only when I went looking for her did I find out the situation had changed. After using all sorts of methods, I finally managed to have a private meeting with Miwa. As soon as Miwa saw me, Miwa began to cry, cry so hard!"

Ning shut his eyes.

He could imagine Spring Grass's agony, regret, and heartbreak.

"She said that this was her own mistake. It was her own stupidity, and that it wasn't the fault of myself, her father. She had willingly done this." Blacktooth said in agony. "She also said...she didn't want you, young master, to learn of this. She didn't want to make you feel heartbroken, which is why she concocted this story of her marrying a travelling merchant, which she left for you in that letter she gave you."

"After giving me the letter, Miwa died. She took poison." Blacktooth said softly. "I knew how much agony my daughter was in. Death was perhaps a type of release. Actually, when she died, she was murmuring your name. She didn't want you to know why she died."

Ning gently nodded.

Understood.

He understood.

After having been with each other for so long, how could he not understand what Spring Grass was thinking?

She wanted that happy, cheerful Spring Grass to live on in Ning's heart....she didn't want Ning to learn of the humiliations she had suffered!

"Every single woman has a man who is destined for her. As soon as I saw him, I knew that he was the one. When I see him smile, I feel happy. When I see him frown, I worry. When I see him training hard with the sword, I stand there and watch. Just looking at him is a gift given by heaven..."

"I really am very happy, very happy. Spring Grass is just a maidservant. For you, young master, to come to the Blacktooth Tribe to visit Spring Grass means at least...Spring Grass has a small place of her own in your heart, young master...Spring Grass is very happy, very happy, truly, very happy."

Ning opened his eyes, tears faintly visible within them.

He quietly walked towards the tombstone, sitting down in front of him. Holding a bamboo tube in his hands, he said softly, "Spring Grass, in the past, you always poured wine for me. It is my turn to pour wine for you." The wine within the bamboo tube dripped onto the ground in front of the tombstone.

"I know. I understand. I know that you are forever the happy Spring Grass, forever happy!"

"Your stupidity truly is adorable."

Ning laughed, but his eyes were filled with tears. "I know what happened to you, but I don't look upon you. How could a little

brother look down on his big sister? Although sometimes his big sister might be a bit stupid...you will always be the big sister of Ji Ning."

Hearing the words, 'big sister', the nearby Autumn Leaf's lips trembled, and she let out a whimper.

"Sis, you were too tired. Sleep, sleep, have a good sleep." Ning said softly. "Those people who took advantage of you, sis, those people who caused you to be heartbroken...I won't spare any of them. Not one."

"Let's go."

Ning put down the bamboo tube and rose. "Let's go to the Riverside Tribe. I am going to meet this River He!"

Chapter 10 – Collapsing the City Walls

“Let’s go!”

Riding on his black beast, Ji Ning and the other two left the Blacktooth Tribe at high speed, disappearing into the distant mountain forests.

“Chief?”

“Where are they going?” The tribesmen at the gate asked, but Blacktooth simply stood there, watching as Ning and the other two left. Shaking his head, Blacktooth said, “Don’t know.” But a look of anticipation through his eyes. He knew...that this young master of the Ji clan was going to the Riverside Tribe to get revenge for his daughter.

But given the status of the Riverside Tribe, would this young master of the Ji clan be able to do so?

“Even if young master Ji isn’t able to get revenge, his father, the Raindrop Sword, Ji Yichuan, definitely is.” Blacktooth’s heart was filled with hatred. He truly hated River He, but unfortunately, his own strength was insufficient.

—————

The Riverside Tribe was hundreds of kilometers away from the Blacktooth Tribe, and mountains lay in the way. Only when the sun rose on the next day did they arrive at the Riverside Tribe.

Every single nearby tribe was living within the city.

A place where over fifty thousand tribesmen were living...this was essentially a city.

“All of you, come over.”

“Right, go on in.”

"Go on through."

The armored guards at the gate inspected the items of the people entering the city. The Riverside Tribe had enemies, and they were concerned about people possibly smuggling in large amounts of siege bows and other such weapons.

"Huh? You three!" Suddenly, an armored guard saw three black armored beasts galloping over at high speed. Seeing that they didn't seem to have any intentions on slowing down, he immediately shouted, "Quickly come to a halt. If you charge through the gate of our Riverside City, we will release arrows." Instantly, the archers above on the guard tower nocked their bows. They wouldn't show any mercy at all.

Swoosh!

Ning, who had been seated on the back of that black east, suddenly flew into the air, charging onto the top of that enormous city wall. And then, a surging wave of invisible energy instantly swept outwards. The dozens of armored guards that were originally on top of the city guard tower felt their bodies suddenly sway, and then they smashed downwards out of the guard tower.

Suddenly, Ning was the only person standing atop the guard tower.

Those armored guards fell down, all of their faces grimy with dirt, and some of the unluckier ones even had bones broken. However, these were all powerful, valiant warriors. They normally wouldn't be injured much just from falling down from the top of the city walls. They only were now because they had been caught off guard by that energy wave which had knocked them down.

"What's going on."

"He, he..."

A group of armored guards stared at Ji Ning, standing atop the city walls, and then looked at their empty hands. Hurriedly, they moved

to pick up the bows that had fallen onto the ground as well.

Standing atop the city walls, Ning stared into the city and let out an enraged bellow, "River He, I order you to come out!"

"River He, I order you to come out!" "River He, I order you to come out!" "River He, I order you to come out!"

This furious bellow that seemed to have come from a Fiendgod exploded forth like thunder. The guards that had been nearby the city walls as well as some passer-bys all clapped their hands to their ears in pain, and some of them even began to flee.

The furious roar echoed throughout every location of the entire Riverside City.

Ning's face was dark. With a massive kick, an enormous exploding sound was heard!

"DONG!" An enormous wall like this one which was six or seven meters thick was extremely durable, but thanks to Ning's kick, it began to vibrate powerfully. One giant crack after another began to appear on the tall, powerful city wall, and some distortions and cracks even began to appear in the ground below it. This kick had caused even the ground nearby to ripple and shake as though the ground was a pool of water, and those armored guards were so terrified that they hurriedly retreated.

"DONG!" Ning delivered yet another kick!

The nearby earth began to shudder yet again, and a large number of cracks had now appeared within the wall. Many stones began to tumble down, and the stone guard tower itself began to shudder, as though preparing to crack at any moment.

"DONG!" Ning delivered one final kick!

Rumble....

The city wall which was already covered with countless cracks finally collapsed. Many boulders came falling down. Instantly, the massive city gate became a pile of rubble. The tall, massive city walls fell downwards towards the street. This scene of rubble lying everywhere caused those armored guards and civilians who had run away long ago to stare in shock.

"My God..."

"The city towers..."

None of them could believe it. The walls of the main gate to a city were the thickest, most stable parts of the city. Even siege machines would at most attack the gates. Attacking the city walls would be entirely useless. That seamless, tough stone that was six or seven meters thick....even if a person slashed down onto it with a knife, at most a scar would be left behind.

Kicking down the city walls with just three kicks?

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Autumn Leaf and Mowu, riding their black beasts, quickly arrived at the area of rubble. By now, Ning had already landed on the rubble as well.

River Sansi was current seated in the lotus position within a quiet room, fragrant room.

He was the chief of the Riverside Tribe, a very famous and reputable person in the territory controlled by the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan.

"River He, I order you to come out!" An enraged bellow suddenly rang out.

"Huh?" River Sansi suddenly opened his eyes.

DONG! DONG! DONG!

The subsequent three massive sounds caused River Sansi's face to change. He immediately transformed into a ray of light, hurrying out.

Moments later.

River Sansi, as a Xiantian lifeform, had already reached the city gates, where those enormous sounds had come from. Upon seeing the destroyed city gates and the rubble, River Sansi's eyes instantly turned red! The city gates had been destroyed. This was like spitting directly into the Riverside Tribe's face, giving them no leeway at all.

"You are River Sansi?" Ning stood atop the rubble. Seeing this black haired old man suddenly appear, he immediately barked towards him. The entire Riverside Tribe only had two Xiantian lifeforms, one male, one female. The male, of course, was River Sansi.

The black haired old man stared at Ning, his face an ugly sight. "No matter who you are, you can't trample the honor and dignity of our Ji clan like this." As soon as he spoke, within his hands, a purple set of chains appeared. With a massive whirl, he sent those chain links flying towards Ning in an attack. Just from the way Ning was acting, there was no question at all that he was the person who had done this.

Swoosh!

Ning suddenly charged forward, moving forward at an intense speed, generating a faint howl like that of a great Roc.

Swish! Ning landed a kick directly on the chest of that black-haired old man, causing the black haired old man to fly backwards. A deep crevice appeared in the stone ground, with the old man sunken into it. The black haired old man immediately jumped up, clutching his chest, a hint of blood on his lips. His face covered in astonishment, he looked at Ning. "You...who are you?"

How could this happen? His magic treasure had yet to strike Ning,

but Ning had sent him flying with a kick. Fortunately, he was protected by his Xiantian Ki.

"Hmph." Ning sneered coldly. "Have River He come out."

Shua!

Yet another figure appeared, this one red-colored. It was an old lady with white hair dressed in red clothes. The old lady hurriedly helped prop up River Sansi. "Sansi, are you alright?"

"Be careful. He is very powerful." River Sansi said quietly.

The red-clothed old granny look at Ning, shouting, "I don't know how our Riverside Tribe has offended you. In addition, who are you? You destroyed our gates. I trust you wouldn't be so cowardly as to not even dare to give us your name!"

Ning said coldly, "Ji clan! Ji Ning!"

"Ji Ning?" The red-clothed granny was puzzled.

"Ji Ning?" The black haired elder, River Sansi, was greatly astonished. He hurriedly said in a soft voice to the nearby granny, "Aunty Snow, the next Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture has been decided upon already. It is someone named Ji Ning. But he is only eleven years old. How could he..."

"The Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture?" Aunty Snow was shocked.

Although they were shocked at Ning becoming a Xiantian lifeform at the age of eleven, they were even more shocked by Ning's status; the next Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture! It was common for a person to become a Xiantian before reaching the age of twenty. The Ji clan alone had quite a few, such as Ji Lie who had also been hoping that one of the three tribal youths he had brought up would reach the Xiantian level before the age of sixteen. If Ji Ning had trained in other Fiendgod Body Refining methods, he most likely

would have reached the Xiantian level as a toddler.

In the numerous tribes, there were even more talented individuals.

There were quite a few who reached the Xiantian level before the age of twenty. River Sansi was one such person! But these tribes didn't have any powerful, ultimate techniques. The more they trained, the lower their potential became compared to the Ji clan!

"Ji clan of the West Prefecture?" Aunt Snow stared at the youth in front of her. Their Riverside Tribe was within the territory of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture and was under their direct authority!

If the Ji clan of the West Prefecture wanted to destroy the Riverside Tribe, it could be accomplished as easily as lifting their hand up.

"Young master!" A voice suddenly rang out.

Over a hundred black armored guards appeared from afar. Upon seeing Ning standing atop the rubble, the leader of the black armored guards, greatly shocked, immediately fell down to one knee. The other black armored guards all hurriedly called out respectfully, "Young master!"

"Rise." Ning glanced at them sideways. In these extremely large tribes, the Ji clan would usually send a squadron of a hundred black armored guards to stay there and watch over them.

"Yes."

The black armored guards hurriedly ran over, standing around Ji Ning.

"Young master Ji Ning." The old granny, Aunt Snow, bowed slightly. "Since it is River He who angered you, young master, my Riverside Tribe naturally will not protect him. Sansi, go bring River He out as soon as possible."

"Right." The black haired elder, River Sansi, immediately went.

A single Xiantian individual wouldn't be enough to cause the Riverside Tribe to lower their heads! Even if the Xiantian belonged to the Ji clan, that didn't mean anything. After all, everything had to have a reason. The Ji clan couldn't act wildly either, otherwise how could the many tribes submit peacefully? A single ordinary Xiantian lifeform was not able to destroy a large-scale tribe.

But if it was the Prefecture Lord himself! Then the situation would be different.

"Keep training!"

River He was an extremely handsome young man with white skin. Only, his eyes contained an extreme arrogance. Currently, he was holding a whip while looking at a toddler, who was wielding a shortsword and training in swordplay. "No matter how sore or painful your arm feels, endure it. You will be the future clan leader of our Riverside clan!"

"Yes, Father." The toddler gritted his teeth, continuing to train. He didn't dare stop. Stopping meant a whip would come his way.

Suddenly....

"River He, come out." A furious roar rang out.

River He's face changed. "Who dares to be this impudent and act like this in Riverside City? This person cannot be ordinary."

DONG! DONG! DONG!

The three kicks which had smashed open the city walls were like kicks against his heart, causing River He to unconsciously feel panic. "Who is it? Who has come looking for me?" No longer paying any attention to anything else, Riverside He hurriedly rushed towards the outside.

"He, what is it?" The inside of the manor was in a state of chaos. His wife came out as well, seemingly very panicked. Some of his other women were worried as well, but some of them were secretly rejoicing at his impending misfortune.

"Let's go take a look." River He headed outside.

Just as he walked out of his manor, from afar, a black figure suddenly pounced downwards, arriving directly in front of River He. River He was shocked when he saw the person. "Clan leader." The black haired elder, River Sansi, stared at him coldly. Sansi had an extremely ugly look on his face, and there was blood at the corner of his mouth. His clothes were extremely dirty. "This is all your doing." As he said this, he grabbed River He by the neck, as though he were picking up a chicken.

Swoosh! He transformed into a ray of light, moving at high speed towards the city gate.

Chapter 11 – For the Tribe

Standing on the cracked streets, the white-haired old granny, Aunt Snow, spoke out. "Young master Ji Ning, if River He has offended you, he deserves death. However, given that he is still young, I wonder if he might perhaps be spared?" In the struggles and battles between tribes, it was generally possible for an important person who had been captured to be released in exchange for a ransom.

Ning glanced at her coldly, not saying a word.

Aunt Snow instantly frowned. She understood that young master Ji Ning's decision to kill River He was unshakable.

"What's going on?"

"Why have the city gates been destroyed?"

"What is going on in the Riverside Tribe?"

"Look, look, that youngster is surrounded by a group of black armored guards. He must be an important figure within the Ji clan." Some of the outsiders who had come to engage in trade in Riverside City quickly began to congregate towards this direction.

Seeing the situation, Aunt Snow immediately shouted, "Have all those onlookers f*ck off."

"Yes."

The armored guards of the Riverside Tribe immediately acknowledged, and quickly began to shoo aside those outsiders as well as even some people of the clan, not letting them draw close.

"Out of the way!"

"Out of the way!"

One unit after another of guards quickly ran at high speed towards

the distant streets, all of them wielding bows and other sorts of weapons. The leader of the units were all core, high-level people of the Riverside Tribe. Clearly, they had heard those explosive sounds from earlier and were worried that an enemy had come in force, and so they had quickly brought their own people to come over.

"Granny Snow." A white-haired elder led a group to rush over. Upon seeing Aunt Snow, he immediately called out respectfully.

Aunt Snow only glanced at him.

One squadron after another drew near. All of the core members of the Riverside Tribe had arrived.

"Swoosh!" A black shadow drew near at high speed as well, only slowing down once it reached the armored guards. Those armored guards wanted to block the black shadow, but when they saw it come to a halt, they were shocked. "Clan leader!"

River Sansi's face was like ice. Still holding onto that handsome young man, he passed straight through the crowd. All of the core members of the tribe stared at River He in confusion. River He was one of River Sansi's grandchildren, and was greatly valued by River Sansi. In the Riverside Tribe, his position was in the top ten of the entire tribe. Why had the clan leader dragged him here?

"Swish!" River Sansi directly tossed him out.

River He fell face-first into the rubble and rocks, wounds appearing on his face and his body becoming covered with dust. He hurriedly raised his head and stood up, looking around him. Soon, his gaze settled down upon the fur-clad youth who was surrounded by black armored guards.

"Young master Ji Ning, I brought him for you." River Sansi stood together with Aunt Snow.

"You are River He?" Ning stared judgmentally at River He. He couldn't help but think of poor Spring Grass, and his heart began to flood

with a desire to slaughter!

River He could feel that this young master Ji Ning emanated an aura of power and influence. In front of this young master Ji Ning...even the clan leader and Granny Snow had to lower their heads.

"River He pays his respects to you, young master." River He said respectfully.

"River He...River He..." Ning gently murmured, his eyes as sharp as daggers as he stared at this youth in front of him. "Do you know why I have come to find you?"

Ning's voice was very soft.

But when River He heard his voice, his heart shook. He could sense the murderous intent contained within Ji Ning's voice!

"I don't know." River He stared at Ning. "Young master Ji Ning, have you come to kill me?"

"Yes." Ning nodded.

The entire area was utterly silent.

River Sansi and Auntie Snow just watched. The core members of the Riverside Tribe just watched as well. They could tell...that this young master Ji Ning clearly had the power to change their entire world. Even the clan leader had to submit to him. In addition, Ji Ning's desire to kill River He was clearly very strong. They just quietly sighed to themselves...the glorious River He, whose prospects had been limitless, was going to die today!

"Young master Ji Ning, if you wish to kill me, then I have no choice but to die." River He's handsome face didn't have a hint of fear on it. He looked at Ning. "But I don't know why you are going to kill me, young master?"

"Why I am going to kill you?" Ning looked at him.

Hua.

A Darknorth sword appeared out of nowhere into Ji Ning's hands. Sword light flashed across River He's body. Instantly, a terrifying, suppressive aura swept out, but River He didn't dodge. The nearby River Sansi and Auntie Snow just watched quietly as well. Even if Ji Ning had killed River He with this sword attack, they wouldn't say a word.

Chi! Chi! Chi! River He's body now had six bloody holes appear on it. His blood flowed outwards from those holes, which were situation in his legs, shoulders, and other non-lethal points.

"This!" River He stared, his eyes wide. "She...she was your..."

"Now do you understand?" Ning looked at him.

The sword technique he had displayed just now when stabbing six bloody holes into River He was the sword technique of Spring Grass. When River He had originally ordered his servants to capture Spring Grass, this was the technique Spring Grass had relied upon when she had beaten those servants half to death before leaving.

"A mere woman. Young master Ji Ning, you are going to kill me for a mere woman? Women are nothing more than merchandise, just property." River He howled in disbelief, unwilling to accept this. "I'm willing to offer ten or a hundred women to you, young master. In addition, she was just a slave. I'm willing to do anything so long as you are willing to spare me, young master."

"In my eyes...you can't even compare to a single hair on her head." Ning said coldly.

His face ashen, River He immediately retrieved a dagger from within his breastpocket. In a gloomy voice, he said, "Young master Ji Ning, I, River He, have offended you, young master, and I deserve to be killed. There's no need for you to dirty your hands, young master. River He will end it personally." As he spoke, he stabbed with his

dagger towards his heart.

Dang!

A sword flash collided against the dagger, sending it flying.

"You actually think you'll be able to die so easily?" Ning stared at River He. "When she died, she did so in agony and humiliation! How can I possibly let you die so easily?"

River He gritted his teeth as he looked at Ning.

Ning shouted, "Mowu!"

"Young master." Mowu immediately stepped forward.

"The suspension punishment." Ning said coldly. "Hang up him at the top of Riverside City."

River He's face turned white.

The suspension punishment generally meant one would have his hands and feet bound up, then hung up in the air and given nothing to eat or drink while allowing the sun to bake the criminal. In addition, prior to this, Ning had left six bloody holes on River He's body. Given River He's life force, he naturally wouldn't die due to bloodloss, but the blood he had lost would attract some birds. The birds which would dare to draw near to the top of Riverside City were all ordinary birds. They would occasionally take a peck out of River He's flesh.

He would slowly be tortured to death in the midst of starvation, agony, and terror...

In addition, countless tribesmen would all be watching. The humiliation he would feel in his heart would cause a proud figure like River He even more agony.

"Yes." Mowu quickly retrieved a set of chains and began to bind and

fetter River He. River He knelt there, his head lowered, not daring to make a sound.

"Father!" A fierce cry rang out, and a toddler came running out from the crowd.

"F*ck off." Seeing that toddler running over, he hurriedly shouted in anger, "F*ck off, f*ck off!"

"Father." The toddler sobbed. Although his father was strict in forcing him to train with the sword, his father deeply loved him.

The distant River Sansi frowned. "Take the child away!"

"Yes."

Immediately, two guards charged forward, grabbing the child and leaving with him. But that child continued to wildly struggle while staring at Ji Ning, his eyes filled with hate.

Ning only stared back calmly at the child. When he was very young, his father, Ji Yichuan, had him train in courage by having him go kill some prisoners. He had seen far more terrifying glares before. The slave markets of West Prefecture City...he had seen numbness, despair, insanity, hatred, supplication. He had seen every sort of gaze there was.

"Hang him up at the highest point of the city." Mowu had two black armored guards help.

River He was completely tied up in metal chains, and his hair was a mess. The nearby tribesmen watched, some of their eyes filled with pity. Others delighted in his misfortune. This humiliation caused River He's entire body to shake constantly.

"Young master." Mowu said softly towards Ji Ning. "That son of River He's...when cutting grass, you must tear out the roots!"

Ning glanced coldly at Mowu.

Mowu hurriedly lowered his head, not daring to say anything else.

"I will spend the next few days at Riverside City." Ning looked at the nearby River Sansi and Aunt Snow. "No need to trouble you. I will stay at the place where the black armored guards are stationed. I will watch as River He slowly dies. After he is dead, I will leave."

The bodies of the surrounding core members of the tribe all shook. All of them could sense the hatred within Ning's voice.

At first, River He didn't have too many problems, baking there in the sun. Afterwards, when some crows began to feast on his flesh, and when the sun began to cause his skin to dry and crack, revealing his red flesh, the pain he went through was absolute hell.

Because of the ki in his body, River He's life force was very strong, but this now became a source of agony to him.

He was baked in the sun until his skin cracked and his flesh congealed. In the midst of this agony, he moaned for three days and two nights before finally dying.

This entire time, Ning remained at Riverside City.

After the black armored guards reported that River He had died in agony, Ning finally took a cold look at River He's tattered corpse, then turned and led Mowu and Autumn Leaf away, mounted on their black beasts.

Ning left Riverside City at night.

Riverside Sansi was currently seated in front of a table, quietly drinking wine from a beaskull cup.

There was a toddler kneeling within the courtyard.

"Cai, child." Sansi lifted his beastskull cup. "I'm going to ask you one more time. Do you want to kill young master Ji Ning?"

"I don't dare. Cai doesn't dare." The kneeling toddler said hurriedly.

"Alas."

River Sansi shook his head. In a soft voice, he murmured, "The hatred you feel will be a disaster to my Riverside Tribe."

"Servants!" River Sansi called out.

"Master." A servant entered and knelt down.

"Alright."

River Sansi said coldly, "Execute all of those servants of River He. None of them are to be spared! River He's women are to be sold off at the slave markets!"

"Clan leader." The toddler grew frantic. One of them was his mother.

"And him." River Sansi looked coldly at the toddler. "River He's only son...he is to be sold off at the slave market as well!"

"No."

"No!" The toddler hurriedly kowtowed. "Clan leader, spare me, spare me!"

"Yes!" The servant replied respectfully, and then stepped forward, grabbing the toddler, then departing.

The toddler continued to struggle, sob, and cry.

Slave?

Why!

Why had this happened!

Watching as the toddler cried and called out in agony, River Sansi was silent.

"Master, you are going to sell River He's women and children as slaves?" A human figure appeared within the dark corners of the room.

River Sansi nodded. When River He had been undergoing the suspension punishment, Sansi had sent people to secretly ask River He...and only then did he understand that the source of this problem came from the Miwa of the Blacktooth Tribe! River Sansi had even sent people to the Blacktooth Tribe to speak with Blacktooth to clearly understand what this was about. And then, he had put to death all of the servants who knew anything about this affair at all.

"Ji Ning doesn't wish for Spring Grass' affair to spread out." River Sansi said calmly. "Spring Grass had once said that she was the servant of young master Ji. Everyone who heard these words needs to be put to death."

"There's no point in keeping River He's women either."

"River He's sole child, Cai...he has too much hatred towards Ji Ning. I asked him several times. Although he verbally stated that he wouldn't seek revenge, how could a toddler like him deceive me? I could see straight to his heart in a single glance. His hatred of Ji Ning is bone deep." Sansi shook his head. "At such a young age, he has already learned to cover up his thoughts. In the future, once he rises to a position of great power within the tribe, given the hatred he feels for Ji Ning, I fear that he might act in a way that would cause our entire Riverside Tribe to be destroyed!"

"Everything that I am doing is to ensure that the Ji clan knows that our Riverside Tribe is loyal!"

The man in the darkness was silent.

"Breaker Three." River Sansi spoke out.

"Master." The man in the darkness replied.

"Send out Breaker Nine." River Sansi said. "Take Cai away in the darkness and send him to the territory under the control of the Ironwood clan and have him just join a small tribe at random. Make him give Cai good training! If Cai has talent and always works hard, give him good tutelage. If Cai quickly forgets his hatred and doesn't train hard, then kill him and have Breaker Nine return."

"Yes." The figure in the darkness nodded.

"Hatred...is a source of strength as well." River Sansi murmured softly. "Our Riverside Tribe, compared to the Ji clan...we're too weak, too weak..."

Chapter 12 – Serpentwing Lake

The three black beasts were travelling through the desolate terrain.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf couldn’t help but speak out. “That son of River He has tremendous hatred towards you. If we let him grow up, in the future, it will most likely be detrimental to you, young master.”

Ji Ning cast a sideways glance at Mowu.

Autumn Leaf hurriedly said, “It wasn’t Mowu who said this to me. I knew that you wouldn’t be happy, but after thinking about it for a long time, I felt I had to say this.”

Ning let out a sigh. “My enmity was with River He. I have no enmity with his son. I went to get revenge. Why do I have to harm his child as well?”

“But when tribes engage in battles against each other, we generally utterly destroy any remaining threats...” Autumn Leaf wanted to speak.

“I understand.” Ning nodded. “For the sake of the tribe’s survival... any sort of measures and means can be used! But how can a small child like him possibly affect my Ji clan? My Ji clan controls this area, and has put countless people to death. Who knows how many people secretly hate our Ji clan? The reason that my Ji clan is able to remain in command isn’t because we didn’t offend people, but rather because we ourselves are powerful!”

Autumn Leaf begun to understand a bit.

“Even if we don’t offend others, if we aren’t powerful, others will still come and destroy you.” Ji Ning said calmly. “But if we are powerful, then those secret enemies might secretly feel resentment, but publicly they will still be very respectful. Most likely, a century later, their sons and grandsons will have truly become loyal subjects of

our Ji clan."

"In addition, when experts train, the heart and mind is very important." Ning said.

The mind and the heavens become one! One with the world!

The mind gains insights into the Dao, and learns the true meaning of the Dao!

Ning understood that a person who was training in the Dao had to be true to himself. Only with a clear mind and clear conscience could one improve at a faster rate when training.

"If a person is not true to himself, not only will he be frustrated, he will also come to a halt in his training, or perhaps even lose ground." Ning shook his head. "If I, Ji Ning, want to kill someone, I will only kill him and him alone. I will not harm his wife and children! This is my true self!"

In his past life, his illness had tormented him and caused him to always be alone. Lonely people often would become accustomed to think about many things. Some thought about too many things and would go insane, while others would see through their own heart and mind and become wise. Ning was one of those who had seen through his own heart, which made him all the more broad-minded and calm. If he hadn't seen through his own heart, how could he have had such resolve to keep training so bitterly in this life?

Autumn Leaf and Mowu glanced at each other.

Be true to themselves?

They didn't understand!

"Enough." Ning saw the looks on their faces and shook his head.

"Don't overthink it. Let's go to Serpentwing Lake."

"Young master, aren't you going to the Blacktooth Tribe? Didn't you

say...that you wanted to help take care of the little brother of Spring Grass?"

Autumn Leaf asked.

"No rush." Ning shook his head. "I'll make a trip to Serpentwing Lake first and kill Serpentwing, then head to the Blacktooth Tribe...the original cause of this disastrous affair was still Serpentwing. One of Spring Grass' two little brothers died to Serpentwing as well. I will use Serpentwing's death to commemorate Spring Grass, and then I'll take her only brother to the West Prefecture City with me."

"Let's go."

Ning rapped his black beast on its chest slightly, and it instantly began to gallop forward.

Autumn Leaf and Mowu followed him towards Serpentwing Lake as well.

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They travelled by day and rested at night. Given the rapid pace at which the black beasts travelled through even mountainous terrain, they still spent three full days before arriving at a place near Serpentwing Lake.

"Greetings, young master."

Ten black armored guards fell down to one knee.

Ning, seated on the black beast, nodded while instructing, "Mowu, Autumn Leaf, the two of you can stay here and rest for a bit. Serpentwing Lake is a few kilometers up ahead. I can't take you there. I will go to Serpentwing Lake by myself."

"Yes." Mowu and Autumn Leaf were both very respectful.

Ning descended from the black beast, and then, moving as agilely as

a great bird, charged into the distance. With but two flashing movements, he disappeared from the field of vision of those ten black armored guards, Mowu, and Autumn Leaf. This was the first time the black armored guards had seen Ning displaying his footwork techniques, and they stared in amazement and disbelief.

Serpentwing Lake was currently forbidden territory.

The Ji clan had arranged for dozens of scattered little squads to be spread around the area, each of which had ten black armored guards. They were located in different areas around Serpentwing Lake, so as to keep a close watch on Serpentwing.

“Huahuahua....” The hundred-kilometer long Serpentwing Lake was vast. One couldn’t see the other side of the lake. Such an enormous lake would of course have three-foot high waves, even when it wasn’t windy.

Ning stood by the shore, staring at Serpentwing Lake. In a soft voice, he said, “This lake truly is immeasurably deep. Even though I can control water, if I were to enter its depths...my speed would probably still be far inferior to Serpentwing.”

The deeper one went, the greater the water pressure would be, and the harder it would be to control water.

A human who was in water wouldn’t even be able to bring out 10% of his power, but a water monster would be more powerful than usual.

“Right now, although I am powerful, compared to a peak Xiantian Diremonster...most likely, I’m just slightly more powerful.” Ning said to himself. And this was because he trained in the [Windwing Evasion], and had gained a hint of understanding into the true nature of the Dao. After all, just by relying on the four stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] alone, he would only roughly have power comparable to other late-stage Fiendgod

practitioners.

Compared to Serpentwing, his power would actually be slightly lower.

Swoosh!

With a series of movements, Ning travelled a kilometer, walking atop the water as though it were land.

"Serpentwing!" Ning let out a loud bellow.

"Serpentwing!" "Serpentwing!" "Serpentwing!"

The sound echoed like thunder, spreading everywhere and piercing deep into the depths of the water of the lake.

Moments later....

In the depths of the sea, within a twisting, dark lair, the Diremonster, Serpentwing, was currently slumbering. His enormous scaled wings surrounded him, protecting his body.

"Serpentwing!" A sound pierced through the water, directly arriving to him.

The slumbering Serpentwing suddenly opened his scarlet eyes.

"What's going on?" Serpentwing let out a low growl. "Investigate immediately."

"Yes."

The sound of screams from terrified lesser water monsters could be heard from outside. Although humans usually weren't able to understand the languages of these lesser monsters, these lesser monsters could all understand each other.

There were two black armored guards hiding within the wild grass fairly close to Serpentwing Lake.

"Serpentwing?"

"Someone is challenging Serpentwing." The two black armored guards exchanged glances of amazement, then hurriedly turned to look. However, they were dozens of kilometers away from Ning, and thus they couldn't see him at all.

"I'll keep watch. You go make the report."

There were over ten black armored guards on watch at all times around Serpentwing Lake, and right now, the three black armored guards closest to Ji Ning were all able to see him. This group of black armored guards had been dispatched from West Prefecture City. Naturally, they were able to recognize Ning.

"It is young master Ji Ning."

"Young master Ji Ning has come to challenge Serpentwing? But young master Ji Ning truly is powerful. He is able to stand atop the water as though it was flat ground. Just like Commander Ji Yichuan had been!"

"Stop talking. Hurry and go back to make the report."

The amazed black armored guards quickly spread the news to all of the little squads, but given their speed...as one might imagine, it would take them at least a day before they were able to reach West Prefecture City.

Ning continued to walk calmly on the surface of the vast waters of Lake Serpentwing.

Huahua....

The head of a large green snake appeared, along with the head of a large black fish. Breaking through the surface of the water, they stared into the distance.

"A human youth?" The two monsters exchanged glances.

Hua!

They both dove into the deeper water, making haste to the watery lair of the Diremonster, Serpentwing.

"Mighty King, mighty King, there is a human youth in the water above." The green serpent monster and the black fish monster both growled out frantically.

"A human youth?" Serpentwing's scaly wings spread out, and his scarlet eyes stared at those two lesser monsters, who were so terrified that they trembled as they nodded.

"But that human youth is standing on the water, just like that Ji Yichuan had done so in the past. The water doesn't sink down at all." The green serpent monster said hurriedly, while the black fish monster also nodded. "Right right right."

"Standing on the water without it sinking at all?"

Serpentwing disappeared into a black mist, then reformed into a black clothed man.

The black clothed man stood there, his slender, narrow eyes filled with suspicion. Serpents were by their very nature cautious. Given that he had also been pursued and often tricked into traps on multiple occasions by the Xiantian experts of the Ji clan, he had long ago become an easily startled creature. Now, a human youth who could walk on water had suddenly come to challenge him. How could he not be suspicious?

"Have you seen him before?" The black clothed man looked at the two lesser monsters.

"Never, never. Before this, we have clearly memorized the appearances of those Xiantian lifeforms surrounding our Serpentwing Lake. This human youth definitely isn't one of those Xiantian lifeforms." The green snake monster hurriedly said, and the black fish monster nodded.

The black clothed man nodded. "Then I will go take a look."

Swoosh!

He stealthily slipped out of his watery lair. Although in his human form Serpentwing wasn't nearly as fast as when he was in his true form, his true form was simply too enormous. If he appeared at the surface of the water, he would cause an enormous commotion and would definitely be noticed.

"Who is it?" The black clothed man quickly and stealthily lifted his head out of the surface of the water to take a look around him.

He immediately saw that roughly eight or nine kilometers away, there was a fur-clad youth. The youth looked very fine and delicate, but he casually walked atop the surface of the water. The area around the youth was completely barren and empty. There were no other human experts there at all.

"It is him!"

The black clothed man's narrow eyes instantly became filled with a terrifying, ferocious light.

A murderous look!

A hateful look!

These feelings instantly filled his mind, causing the water around him to begin to tremble with the force of his emotions.

The distant Ji Ning seemed to have sensed him, as he turned to look. Ning instantly saw him. Although Serpentwing was currently in

human form, Ning immediately recognized that this was the Diremonster, Serpentwing.

"Serpentwing!" Ning let out an angry shout.

The black clothed man gave Ning a cold, sinister glance, and then sunk down slowly into the depths of the lake.

"Serpentwing." Ning ran over at high speed over the surface of the water, quickly arriving at that part of the lake. Staring downwards into the depths, he shouted, "Didn't you want to kill me? Don't you have a hatred for me which is so deep, it is engraved into your bones? Come out, come out...I am waiting here for you to come kill me."

Deep within the water.

The narrow eyes of the black clothed man were burning with the flames of rage. He truly was filled with an incomparable desire to fly upwards, attack, and devour the flesh of this Ji Ning.

"I personally killed that big crimson snake."

"Hahaha, I killed him with a single blow. He really was pathetic!" The voice from above continuously transmitted downwards, further stoking the flames of Serpentwing's rage.

The black clothed man was trembling slightly, but he managed to suppress the killing urge in his mind. "I can't be hasty. Can't be hasty. If I am hasty, I will fall into the Ji clan's crafty trap. Before this, Poison Dove Ridge and the Ji clan only agreed that I would be restricted from leaving Serpentwing Lake for a century, and that only the highest level members of the clan, the Zifu Disciples, would be restricted from acting. There was no agreement forbidding those Xiantian lifeforms from acting against me."

Humans and the monsters fought viciously against each other.

However, there were some limits and some restrictions. For example,

the true leaders of each side wouldn't act against and bully the weaker members of each side. That old monster at the Zifu level wouldn't kill...and the Zifu Disciple of the Ji clan wouldn't kill either.

After all, the Zifu level experts were the foundation.

Once Zifu experts began to fight each other, once one fell, that would shake the very foundations of a clan. Neither humans nor monsters wanted their foundations to be shaken.

"The area around that Ji Ning is empty. There are no humans there." The black clothed man's eyes flashed with a ferocious light. "But why would he come to throw his life away? Most likely, his father, Ji Yichuan, and some other Xiantian lifeforms are nearby, utilizing some sort of concealing formation technique to hide there. Once I come out, I will most likely instantly be attacked en masse."

Chapter 13 – Serpentwing's Lair

Ji Ning stood on the surface of the water, staring at his surroundings.

Everything was silent. The only sound that could be heard was that of the wind blowing atop the surface of the lake, and the waves it created.

"Serpentwing is even more careful and cautious than I had expected. Not only does he remain within the depths, even when I, his most hated foe, appeared, he still doesn't dare come attack me." Ning frowned.

To draw Serpentwing out would be very hard!

Otherwise, the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan wouldn't have been unable to do anything about Serpentwing. Ji Ning's breakthrough to the Xiantian lifeform level was still a secret, with very few people aware of it. Serpentwing naturally didn't know either. In the eyes of Serpentwing, Ning was perhaps just an eleven year old youth who had very powerful footwork techniques. He wasn't a threat, but despite that, Serpentwing still managed to curb his impulse to attack.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly frowned.

Some heads were jutting up secretly from far away in the pond.

"Lesser monsters." Out of nowhere, that greatbow Ning had retrieved from Ironwood Zhan suddenly appeared, along with four arrows. He quickly nocked his bow and fired.

Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua!

The four arrows instantly pierced outwards, terrifying those lesser water monsters to hurriedly dive down. But how fast were Ning's arrows? Immediately, a series of agonized howls could be heard, and even a large fish tail flapped on the surface of the water. Leaving

behind only a pool of blood, the lesser monsters all hid themselves away.

"Serpentwing." Holding his greatbow, Ning shouted, "I didn't expect that you, a mighty Diremonster, would be forced to the state of only daring to have those lesser monsters appear. You really make me look down upon you!"

"Ji Ning."

A deep, growling voice suddenly emerged from the depths of the lake.

Ning instantly felt a surge of joy in his heart. Serpentwing finally had spoken.

"Don't even think that you can succeed in using these despicable measures. Do you think I don't know that your father and the others are hiding nearby?" The growling voice emanated from the depths. "How could you, a little child of the Houtian level, possibly have come to throw your life away?"

"Hahaha, Houtian?" Ning laughed loudly. His body immediately began to be covered by a layer of hazy light, while he pointed at the surface of the lake. A sword light shot out from his fingernail, piercing straight into the depths of the lake. "Open up your serpentine eyes and take a good look!"

Swish!

The sword light tunneled through the depths of the lake, creating tremors.

"*Huala ...*" Several kilometers away, a black figure raised his head up, staring in his direction with eyes filled with shock. "Xiantian? You are already Xiantian?"

"Dare you battle me?!" Ning shouted. "If you are worried that I have arranged an ambush, then you can pick any location in the lake or

any island within this hundred-kilometer wide Serpentwing Lake! You and me, one on one. Dare you battle me?"

Serpentwing stared at the distant youth atop the water. He hesitated.

Even if Ji Yichuan and his men were lying in ambush, how many places could they possibly have prepared an ambush?

"You humans are incomparably crafty. Even if you, a youth, have reached the Xiantian level, how could the Ji clan possibly let you just die? There must be some scheme I don't know about." Serpentwing immediately sunk deep into the water while roaring angrily, "If you have any courage, come to the depths of the lake. I will definitely have a battle with you here. Above the water? I definitely won't fall for your tricks!"

Ning, atop the water, cursed angrily, "As cowardly as a mouse!"

Swoosh!

Ning was so furious that he immediately turned and left, walking atop the waves and quickly arriving on the island in the center of Serpentwing Lake. He leapt directly atop the island.

"How can he be so cowardly." Ning didn't have any ideas either. He wasn't so arrogant as to head directly into the bottom of the lake to do battle with a peak Xiantian aquatic Diremonster.

At the bottom of the lake.

"Mighty King, mighty King, that human youth is on the island." Several lesser monsters reported.

"He went to the island?" The black clothed man sat there, suppressing the fury in his heart.

"Father, Silvertip and the others are on the island." Suddenly, a serpent called out in worry.

"Silvertip?"

The black clothed man was instantly shocked.

He remembered now. Ever since Poisonsdove Ridge and the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan had engaged in their negotiations, he had carefully remained beneath the water, not even daring to go to his lair on the island! But those children of his and those lesser monsters weren't as cautious. They would occasionally head to the island. After all, in the past, that island was their true home.

"How many? How many of my children are on the island?" The black clothed man shouted angrily.

"It should just be Silvertip. But there are hundreds of lesser monsters there." The serpent immediately reported.

The black clothed man's face changed greatly when he heard this. "Immediately send some lesser monsters to inform Silvertip and have him immediately come back."

"Yes."

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Ning was a human, after all. When walking atop the water, he had to maintain his mind at the 'one with the world' level at all times. Since for now he had no way of forcing Serpentwing out, Ning headed directly to the island to take a rest.

"This island used to be Serpentwing's lair in the past." Ning glanced at the surroundings. "In the past thousand years, this place has always been the territory of monsters. Since I'm unable to have Serpentwing come out, then I might have a good look at this island!"

Ning slowly walked about.

Each step, however, was like the wind, as graceful and as fast as gentle smoke. He wandered about the muddy beaches of the island. The island had an area of roughly twenty kilometers. It wasn't a small one. There were some hills and creeks in the island.

"Growl...." From afar, a millstone-sized crimson crab was currently waving its big metal pincers, staring at Ning.

"Lesser water monsters." Ning kicked a rock, which with a *'Swoosh !'* shot out. Then, with a clang, it struck on the crab monster's shell, causing it to flip around multiple times before it came to a halt and stopped moving. When Ning left, the giant crab flipped over yet again, hurriedly charging back down into the depths of the lake.

This used to be Serpentwing's lair was in the past, after all. Even though Serpentwing currently wasn't here, there were still quite a few lesser aquatic monsters who lived on this island. When they saw Ning, these lesser monsters wanted to attack him. The weaker monsters were taught a lesson by Ning, while when dealing with the peak Houtian monsters, Ning showed no mercy at all.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly turned and looked into the distance. From afar, there was a great cavern entrance, from which a large silver serpent suddenly emerged. By the side of this silver serpent were a number of lesser water monsters that were many meters wide.

None of those lesser monsters were physically small.

Most likely, all of them were peak Houtian.

"*Swoosh !*" Ning moved, instantly charged forwards.

"Hurry and leave."

"Leave."

"That human youth should be a Xiantian lifeform." These peak Houtian lesser monsters all growled to each other. None of them attacked Ning. Rather, they all scattered in every direction, towards

the distant waters of the lake.

That greatbow and four arrows appeared in Ning's hands, and he once more pulled his arrow.

After firing those four arrows, he fired four more!

Hua! Hua! Hua! One arrow after another shot out.

Instantly, the ten physically largest Houtian lesser water monsters were all killed. Some of the smaller, weaker monsters were able to escape into the water.

"Ji Ning, you killed yet another one of my sons. I will definitely kill you, definitely kill you!" An enraged growl echoed from the depths of the lake, causing Ning, who had been preparing to enter the lair entrance, to be astonished.

"Killed another son? How many children does this old monster have?"

Ning curiously swept the surrounding area with a glance. There were three Houtian-level snake-type aquatic monsters that he had killed with his arrows. Which one was Serpentwing's child? Ning didn't know that the old monster, Serpentwing, originally had 92 children, only many had been eaten by other monsters or killed by humans, with only sixteen surviving.

Two more of those were then killed by Ning.

However, to Serpentwing...the one he was the most devoted to was still Redtip, the one which had Fiendgod heritage.

"Old monster Serpentwing, all you can do is shout out verbally. Does this lair of yours have any more children within it? I'm going to go in and kill them." Ning called out as he entered the lair.

This lair was a place where Serpentwing had lived for a thousand

years. It was dark inside, with twisting paths.

Ning moved forward, his Darknorth swords at the ready.

Within the lair, he repeatedly encountered some aquatic monsters who charged at him. Some were ferocious, others were bizarre. As soon as they saw this human youth, it was as though they had seen a delicacy which they all wanted to devour. For some of the extremely weak lesser monsters, Ning would just knock them flying...whether they died as a result or just fainted, he didn't bother with them further.

But Ning still exterminated all of the peak Houtian aquatic monsters.

"This lair truly is infathomably deep." Ning continued going deeper into the twisting tunnels of the lair. Suddenly, within the dark tunnels, a blurry, enormous beast shadow appeared in the shape of the head of a giant grizzly. This enormous shadow of a grizzly head seemed to open its mouth wide, trapping Ning within.

Ning's face changed dramatically.

At the same time, he discovered that he was now completely incapable of movement. He could neither advance, nor retreat.

"This, this...is a relic site!" Ning instantly thought of this term.

In the boundless world, from the Fiendgod era to the modern era, countless numbers of experts had existed throughout the countless years. There were thus an uncountable number of Fiendgod relic sites and Immortal mansion relic sites throughout the land. Since humankind was spread across the entire world, people would often accidentally enter some ancient Fiendgod relic sites, some of whom would be able to gain some benefits from these places.

Most, however, died within these Immortal relic sites and Fiendgod relic sites. In just the books which Ning had read, there were many famous ancient relic sites that had devoured countless creatures.

"I actually encountered a relic site. Live. I will definitely make it out alive. Definitely!" Ning's eyes were filled with incomparable desire. He understood that in the face of these ancient relic sites of great powers and Fiendgods, he, a mere Xiantian, had no chance to fight back at all. His only choice was to submit to it, and then later try to come up with a way to escape.

The enormous shadow of a grizzly bear head swallowed Ning with one gulp.

The shadow vanished.

Ning vanished as well.

The tunnels within Serpentwing's lair remained as calm and peaceful as ever, as though nothing had happened.

Chapter 14 – Aquatic Manor

Ji Ning could sense spacetime changing. It was similar to the feeling he had when he had jumped into the Six Paths of Reincarnation.

A heartbeat later, everything calmed down again.

“This place...” Ning hurriedly inspected his surroundings. He himself was in a large, wide corridor that was three hundred meters tall and three hundred meters wide. When Ning turned to look behind him, he was greatly shocked. Behind him was the exit to this corridor, but the outside was covered with a vast, endless amount of water. The water, however, was completely unable to enter this corridor, as though some sort of invisible screen was blocking out the water.

“What is going on?” Ning carefully stepped over, an arrow appearing in his hand. He sent it piercing directly towards the water.

Chi !

The arrow collided with an invisible barrier. No matter how he tried, he couldn't pierce through.

“I don't believe it.” Ning hurriedly took ten steps back, then took out that 'Jia Yong' greatbow. Letting out a soft snort, his entire body began to be covered with a crimson red light. Clearly, the Fiendgod energy was being completely released. Pulling the bow into a near circle, he immediately shot out an arrow, which flew like a ray of light towards that invisible barrier.

The arrow was shattered to pieces, falling to the ground.

“This...” Ning frowned, carefully inspecting this corridor yet again.

“The corridor alone is three hundred meters tall.” Ning looked through the invisible barrier into the boundless water outside. “This building is definitely astonishingly large, at least multiple kilometers across. And it was built underwater...”

"Is it at the bottom of Serpentwing Lake?" Ning shook his head.

Serpentwing Lake was only a lake with an area of a hundred square kilometers. It would be quite hard for such an enormous structure to fit within it. Most likely, if it was in Serpentwing Lake, the Ji clan would have discovered it long ago.

"Just then, I had the sense of spacetime twisting, as though creating a tunnel in space." Ning said to himself. "I'm afraid I've entered a separate dimension."

After having read many books, he knew many things.

The books had recorded that in the countless years of time's passage, some powerful Immortals or powerful Fiendgods were able to create their own little dimensions. A single grain of sand might store an entire world of its own! Some Immortal estate relic sites or Fiendgod relic sites were located in these small dimensions and small worlds. Normally, it was impossible to find them. Only by luck or misfortune would one accidentally enter.

However, these estates left behind by these great powers were all extremely dangerous. After all, how could the Immortals and Fiendgods not leave behind some defensive mechanisms? The vast majority of those who entered relic sites would die. If one was able to stay alive and flee, that would already be a stroke of luck. As for those legends of people who were able to actually obtain treasures from within, Ning didn't even dare think of that?

"Can't be greedy! I just need to work hard to stay alive and escape." Ning carefully inspected his surroundings.

The unknown represented opportunity.

But it also represented enormous risks!

"This underwater estate...for now, I'll call it the Serpentwing Aquatic Manor." Ning casually picked a name for it. Since for now he wouldn't be able to leave this corridor, he might as well head in.

The corridor was wide and tall, and the floor seemed to be made from a single massive slab. Ning tried everything he could think of, yet still was unable to leave a single mark on the walls.

After walking a short while.

The corridor turned, and Ning's eyes narrowed. From afar, he saw one white skeleton after another, littering the floor. The flesh on these skeletons had rotted away long ago, but the strange thing was, there were very few magic treasures on the ground. Only some of the most distant, most complete skeletons on the far left still had some armor, weapons, and magic treasures near them.

"The other corpses don't have magic treasures?" Ning was suspicious. "Even if they don't have magic treasures, they should at least have some sharp weapons. How could they not have a single one?"

"Swoosh !"

With a thought, Ning sent his divine will outwards, picking up all of those skeletons with armors and weapons and depositing them in front of him.

Swish .

As soon as they landed on the ground, the skeletons instantly shattered.

"It seems they died long ago." Ning glanced at the armor and weapons. He immediately picked them up and began to use his Xiantian ki to attempt to bind them, but as he did so, he discovered... because the previous owners had died too long ago, two of the magic treasures didn't have any magic power within them. Thus, Ning was easily able to bind them.

"Even I can bind them. It seems these are only unranked magic

treasures." Ning said to himself. "It seems the dead only had Xiantian level power."

And then, Ning began to inspect the various corpses. He quickly noticed a ring on one of the corpse's fingers. He immediately picked up the ring and began to bind it. Indeed...this ring was the dead person's storage-type magic treasure. Taking a casual glance inside this storage magic treasure, Ning was greatly shocked. The space inside it wasn't that great, somewhat smaller than Ironwood Zhan's.

But...

"So many magic treasures." Ning was astonished. Within this storage magic treasure, one magic treasure was floating after another, all possessing extraordinary auras. There were weapons, formation treasures, armor, and even more storage treasures.

"Why would a single person need to carry this many magic treasures?" Ning glanced at the many corpses in the distance, none of which had magic treasures on them. "Most likely, this person had collected the magic treasures of all the others."

Ning quickly began to bind them.

As he started binding them, he discovered...this storage ring had a total of 112 storage-type magic treasures, 136 weapon-type magic treasures, 31 armor-type magic treasures, and 16 bizarre magic treasures, including formation-types. There were quite a few Dao-seals as well, but unfortunately, too much time had passed, and the magic power within the Dao-seals had all leaked out. Only ten or so Dao-seals were still somewhat serviceably usable.

"If I'm able to bind them, then these are all unranked magic treasures." Ning murmured. "The previous owners of these magic treasures were all Xiantian lifeforms. In other words, everyone who came to this tunnel in the past were all Xiantian lifeforms."

Ning selected one of the storage-type magic treasures that had a

storage space of nearly three hundred meters, a storage belt, and wrapped it around his waist. This storage belt, on the surface, looked like it was nothing more than a sturdy, plain belt. Ning then selected an excellent armor, binding it and then wearing it over his skin.

This armor was far more powerful than the Goldstar Shirt. The Goldstar Shirt was thus decommissioned, and Ning stored it away.

Actually, these magic treasures didn't make Ning particularly overjoyed. After all, he was the next Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture. He would easily be able to obtain protective treasures.

"However, the number is quite great. All together, the value is probably comparable to a low-ranked magic treasure." Ning didn't think about it any longer. The fellow in front of him had also acquired many magic treasures, but in the end, he had also died. What mattered was escaping with his life.

Wielding his two Darknorth swords, Ning carefully made his way forward. After all, there was no other path he could take. His only choice was to advance!

In terms of power, the Darknorth swords weren't inferior to these unranked magic treasures. In addition, he didn't have to use any Xiantian ki in order to use them. Naturally, Ning would prefer to keep using his Darknorth swords.

—————
Ning stepped forward carefully.

As he walked past those skeletons, he became even more cautious. Suddenly...

PA! PA! PA! PA! PA! PA! PA!

One golden pea after another suddenly appeared out of thin air. Many golden peas appeared in the surrounding area, all of which let

out a clear ringing sound as they hit the floor. And then, these golden peas quickly began to melt, transforming into a golden liquid, each drop of which then quickly transformed into weapon-wielding, golden-armored celestial warriors.

Flashing with golden light, the incomparably dazzling, powerful celestial warriors and celestial generals stood around him.

"Growing soldiers from peas?" Ning was stunned. At the same time, he could sense that these golden-armored celestial warriors all had powerful auras. He could sense they were all at the Xiantian level of power. "And there's eighty one of them?"

"You who dare trespass in the manor, prepare to die!" The eighty one golden-armored celestial warriors shouted in unison, and then they charged over and attacked.

The two Darknorth swords in his hands, Ning instantly understood everything. Those skeletons had most likely been killed by those eighty one golden armored soldiers. Not hesitating at all, Ning instantly began to utilize the Windwing Evasion technique. With a 'Swoosh' sound, he ran across the side of the walls of the corridor like a giant Roc in flight, instantly passing through those eighty one golden armored soldiers and wanting to continue forward.

"Formation, activate!" The eighty one golden armored warriors shouted in unison.

Instantly, at two sides of the corridor, a hazy mist arose. As Ning charged into the mist, he shot out with his sword, but was unable to pierce into it even slightly.

"Don't even think of escaping." The eighty one golden armored warriors charged over once again.

"A Trap Formation?"

Ning looked at the two hazy mists. "It seems if I don't kill these eighty one golden armored soldiers, I won't be able to continue. Those

fellows all died, but I'm not as weak as them."

Swoosh !

Ning utilized the Windwing Evasion technique, once again running across the surface of the corridor at high speed until he arrived behind the golden armored soldiers, and then he stabbed directly at one of those soldiers.

"Dang, dang, dang!" Three sword blows at once.

Bang !

Ning pierced through the head of that golden armored soldier, but the soldier still stabbed backwards with his spear.

"What." Ning was so frightened, he hurriedly jumped back in retreat.

"Even a Xiantian level Fiendgod Body Refiner stabbed through the head would definitely die. How could this golden armored soldier not die?" Ning instantly grew frantic. Just then, in that short exchange, he had discovered that the spearcraft of that golden armored soldier could only be considered at the 'advanced' level, but in terms of strength, it was no lower than Ning's.

The worst part of it was...not even stabbing through the soldier's head had done anything.

"Kill!" Ning's stabbing blow through that soldier's head seemed to have truly infuriated these golden armored soldiers, who all began to bellow angrily and wildly attack him en masse.

Ning utilized his footwork, moving through the attacking golden armored soldiers. At every moment, he was dealing with three separate opponents. By relying on his twin Darknorth swords, he stabbed through the throat, skull, and various other fatal points of the golden armored guards, but the golden armored guards remained undamaged.

"Waterflame Lotus!" Ning was frantic.

Huahuahua

In the area around Ning, three enormous lotus petals of fire and three enormous lotus petals of water appeared, surrounding him in every direction. The two layers of lotus petals were slowly swiveling in opposite directions. Instantly, six of the golden armored soldiers who were within the range of the Waterflame Lotus became crushed by the pressure of the Waterflame Lotus back into liquid form.

But the golden liquid quickly flowed outside the range of the Waterflame Lotus, then once more reformed into six Golden Armored Soldiers.

"How is that possible?" Ning, seeing the situation, couldn't believe it. They had already been dissolved; how could they reform?

"It wasn't that the previous Xiantian lifeforms were too weak; it was that these eighty one golden armored soldiers are completely unkillable." Ning clearly found himself at a loss for how he should deal with these eighty one golden armored soldiers. After all, even after they were crushed, they simply liquefied then returned into human form.

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

The six golden armored guards which had been crushed seemed to have caused these golden armored guards to be even angrier.

"Prepare the formation!" The eighty one golden armored soldiers shouted angrily in unison. All of these golden armored guards flew out at high speed, quickly completely surrounding Ji Ning.

These golden armored guards formed into two circles, an inner circle

and an outer one. The inner circle had twenty seven golden armored guards, while the other one had fifty four, all of them pointing their spears at Ning and staring at him angrily.

Chapter 15 – The Full Story

The twenty seven golden armored soldiers simultaneously stabbed out with their glittering golden spears, carrying boundless force as they attacked Ji Ning! The fifty four golden armored soldiers behind also simultaneously aimed their spears, preparing to swap in at any moment.

“There’s definitely a flaw. There definitely is a chance for success. If they truly are immortal, then they would exhaust me to death through by using up my energy.” Wielding the Darknorth swords in his hands, Ning charged forward, as fast as the wind. Dangdangdang! The Darknorth sword and the spears clashed. Ning blocked the spears while at the same time, charging into the midst of those golden armored soldiers.

“Retreat!”

“Attack!”

The twenty seven golden armored soldiers in the center retreated in unison at high speed, while the fifty four golden armored soldiers then formed an even wider encirclement, allowing Ning to be the ‘turtle in their jar’.

“Can it be?” Ning suddenly frowned.

“Waterflame Lotus!” Ning made his decision.

Huahuahua....

Around him eight pairs of Waterflame Lotuses suddenly appeared, each one created from a single water lotus petal and a single fire lotus petal. Because this attack contained a hint of the true meaning of the Dao, even Ning had to use his full force when utilizing this attack, and dividing his mind to the point of creating these eight Waterflame Lotuses was extremely arduous for him.

"Kakaka..." The eight Waterflame Lotuses swiveled, grinding like millstones while surrounding sixteen golden armored soldiers. These golden armored soldiers all frantically dodged, but all of their bodies began to crack from the tremendous pressure.

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

The golden armored warriors howled angrily, bellowing as they dodged past the Waterflame Lotuses and attacked Ning.

Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords, was like a vicious tiger. His sword shadow danced like fire, instantly chopping one of the golden armored warriors into three pieces. But the body of the warrior who was chopped into three pieces quickly then reconnected and reformed, then once more bellowed and attacked Ning.

"So this really is the case. This really is the case." Ning was jubilant, and he laughed loudly. "What nonsense about these golden armored warriors having 'immortal bodies'. That's just for frightening people. Every time I injure you, your power goes down. Haha. I want to see how long you can hold on for."

Previously, when the eighty one golden armored guards had set up their formation attacks, Ning, when blocking, had discovered that the power of these golden armored guards had dropped slightly. Although it wasn't by much, Ning's senses were extremely sensitive, so he was still able to discover it.

Thus, Ning simultaneously created eight Waterflame Lotuses, badly injuring those sixteen golden armored warriors.

After exchanging blows with them again, Ning discovered...that the power of these golden armored warriors had weakened considerably.

"The eighty one golden armored warriors are like a single unit. If one is badly wounded, the others will be affected as well." Ning said to

himself. "In addition, these golden armored warriors are made from golden liquid. They don't have any 'vital points' to speak of. As long as I constantly injure them, their magical power will constantly deplete...and in the end, they will definitely collapse."

"Kill!"

The golden armored warriors were utterly fearless.

Ning continued to control the eight Waterflame Lotuses, causing them to surround and grind down against the golden armored warriors repeatedly, while at the same time he himself constantly dodged with his Darknorth swords...Ning discovered that each time, when he stabbed the golden armored warriors with his swords, their power dropped very slowly. However, when the Waterflame Lotuses ground them to pieces, the power would drop somewhat faster.

This was a war of attrition.

"Swish!" One golden armor warrior shattered and fell apart, transforming into nothingness. Then all eighty one golden armored warriors completely disappeared.

Ning let out a long breath, releasing his nearby Waterflame Lotuses.

"Too...too troublesome."

"If I didn't have the Waterflame Lotus technique, I probably would've been exhausted to death." Sensing the remaining 'Crimsonbright' divine power in his body, Ning couldn't help but sigh. The Crimsonbright divine power in his body only had roughly half left. And this was only because the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] technique he trained in resulted in an extraordinarily dense base of power.

This battle had primarily relied upon Ning using the Waterflame Lotus to grind them into small pieces repeatedly, while he had only

utilized the Crimsonbright divine power in his Darknorth swords to defend! Despite that, half of his divine power had been used up.

Ning glanced behind him, seeing those corpses lying on the ground. Some of them had been transformed into dust from the battle, but a few still remained.

"Those that died here were most likely exhausted to death." Ning said to himself. "Fiendgod Body Refiners are proficient at long-lasting, endurance battles, but I still found it so hard. How could those who relied solely upon Ki Refining to reach the Xiantian level possibly survive?"

Hua...

The two walls of mist at each side of the tunnel slowly dissipated.

Ning carefully made his way towards the corner of the corridor, not going forward yet. He instead took a glance towards the other side, and saw that far away, on the other side of the corridor, there were corpses present as well.

"There's even more corpses. It seems the next corridor is just as dangerous. I really wonder how many dangers this ancient relic site contains within it." Ning's heart shivered. "And most likely, those who died there had successfully passed through those eighty one golden armored soldiers."

"Come."

Ning stared at those corpses on the other side of the hall. He realized that here as well, only a few of the corpses had armor and weapons on them. He used his divine will to pull one of the corpses and its magic treasures over to himself.

"Those who were able to break through the previous corridor most likely had quite some magic treasures." Ning carefully inspected the skeleton. The large skeleton was more than three meters tall. The most likely location of its storage treasure was on the armguard

covering its skeletal arm. Ning quickly removed the armguard and bound it. "It really is a storage-type magic treasure."

"So many things."

This storage-type magic treasure had more than a thousand magic treasures within it. Ning easily bound all of them, but he discovered to his resignation...that all of them were unranked magic treasures.

"All of them are unranked." Ning shook his head. "Although there's more than a thousand, all of them combined are worth perhaps less than 1% of the Traceless Talisman."

The Traceless Talisman was a guardian treasure of the Prefecture!

Even ranked magic treasures would find it difficult to compare to it.

"Take a rest first." Ning sat in the lotus position. Taking out a bamboo tube, he opened the cork, raised his head, and drank it. Then he took out some roast meat and began to eat. "Although these old fellows who died left behind their storage treasures, they didn't leave behind any food at all. It has been too long. Their food became dust long ago."

"These unranked magic treasures aren't very useful to me either."

"After all, I only need a few magic treasures." Ning shook his head. For example, storage-type magic treasures; what was the point of having several hundred? Would he gain any extra power at all? If he wasn't able to survive, most likely the thousand-plus unranked magic treasures he had found would in turn be discovered in the future by someone else.

Ning sat there, eating and drinking, not in a rush to go forward.

At the same time, the Crimsonbright divine power slowly began to recover.

After eating and drinking, Ning then flipped through each storage-type magic treasure to see what was inside. Occasionally, he saw some training manuals or sword technique manuals. However, the most important ultimate technique books were generally destroyed after being learned, to prevent them from being leaked to others! Thus, these books which had been brought were all quite ordinary, not very valuable.

Only a single copy was comparable to the [Raindrop Sutra].

"I suppose this is an unexpected benefit." Ning laughed. And then he once more began to flip through the large number of storage-type magic treasures, searching through them.

Clothes!

Utensils!

Toys!

All sorts of curiosities were removed. During the treasure searching process, Ning's mood improved greatly as well.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly picked up a strange piece of bark. He was about to toss it, but then he saw the words atop it. His face immediately changed."

"Wudan, our clan just received word that Immortal Juhua, someone who has lived for millions of years, ever since the Fiendgod era, has publicly announced that he is accepting disciples. Although Immortal Juhua is a Loose Immortal, for him to be able to survive millions of years and undergo countless tribulations without dying means, according to our clan leader, his power is not inferior to that of a Celestial Immortal.

Immortal Juhua has never before accepted a disciple. Not even the Second Prince of our Grand Xia Dynasty was able to successfully become his disciple.

The news that Immortal Juhua is accepting a disciple has been spread long ago.

In addition, Immortal Juhua has also said publicly that the student he is accepting must be a Fiendgod Body Refiner, who at least must be at the Xiantian level, and at most can be of the Zifu level! He would set down two paths...one for Xiantian lifeforms to traverse, while the other is for Zifu Disciples to traverse.

There are three trials in each path!

After breaking through the three trials without dying, one would become the heir to Immortal Juhua!

Immortal Juhua will only accept a single disciple!

As for the place he is accepting a disciple, Immortal Juhua has set his immortal estate down in the Thousand Autumns Island of the Darknorth Sea. Most likely, he will only leave after recruiting his disciple. Traveling from our place to the distant Darknorth Ocean's Thousand Autumns Island will take at least half a year. Make haste. If you are late, someone else will seize the opportunity. Wudan, I've given you the news. Whether you go or not is your decision.

Signed, Godbanian Water!"

Looking at this incomparably ancient tree bark in his hands, Ning couldn't breath. "Godbanian clan? This tree bark should be the bark of a Godbanian tree. No wonder this ancient letter was able to persist for so long."

The Godbanian tree was immortal and would never decay.

Some precious items would generally be put in wooden cases made out of Godbanian wood. Godbanian trees were the unique products of the 'Godbanian clan', and it was their proof of identity. That was a truly incomparably powerful clan, unspeakably more powerful than

the Ji clan. That was a clan that could be described as supreme, even throughout the entirety of the vast domain of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

"Immortal Juhua?" Ning frowned, pondering. "Immortal Juhua was accepting a disciple. He existed in the Fiendgod Era, and had been alive for millions of years when he started looking for a disciple. But from the Fiendgod Era until now, it has probably been billions or trillions of years."

"Far too much time has passed since this 'seeking a disciple' affair. That Immortal Juhua most likely died long ago." Ning understood.

Loose Immortals would constantly undergo the Three Calamities and the Nine Tribulations. It was a miracle for a person to survive millions of years without dying. How could one possibly have survived to this era?

"Then this underground estate..."

"It should be the underground estate where Immortal Juhua tested potential disciples. This corridor that I am currently in should be one of the two corridors for his potential disciples." Ning said to himself.

Ning looked at the distant corpses.

Although those corpses were clearly of Fiendgod Body Refiners, the fact that they still remained meant that they didn't die too long ago.

Clearly, Xiantian-level or Zifu Disciples who were Fiendgod Body Refiners often were transported into this Immortal estate. He himself was one of those unlucky souls.

"Since Immortal Juhua decided to take an apprentice, the requirements for his apprentice must have been extremely strict. Otherwise, he would have easily accepted a disciple long ago." Ning said to himself. "There are three trials on each path. It seems that was the first trial just now, which forced me to rely on the Waterflame Lotuses in order to pass through it. The next two trials will most likely be even more terrifying and dangerous...how will I

past them?"

"Can it be that I will be like them? That I will die and rot here?" Ning looked at the distant corpses, not breathing as he pondered.

Chapter 16 – The Waiting Parents

Within West Prefecture City.

“Yichuan, I heard Ji Ning has already broken through to the Xiantian level. Congratulations!”

“Yichuan, your son really is formidable.”

“He’s only eleven this year, right? A Xiantian at eleven. He ranks amongst the top three talents of the past thousand years for our Ji clan’s Five Prefectures.”

Ji Yichuan, who had always been like an implacable glacier, had a rare hint of delight on his face. Although he was still stiff-faced, those who were familiar with him could sense how happy Yichuan currently was. Ever since Ning had kicked down the walls of the Riverside Tribe with three kicks, then knocked River Sansi flying with another kick, the news had quickly spread back to the Ji clan.

This news had already spread across all five of the prefectures of the Ji clan. As his father, Ji Yichuan naturally felt very happy in his heart. The past two days, he often heard words of praise and congratulations. By nature, people liked to praise the praiseworthy even further. Now that Ning had already been selected to be the next Prefecture Lord, and also was so monstrous as to become a Xiantian lifeform at age eleven, everyone understood that in the future, the lineage of Ji Yichuan and Ji Ning would be incomparably glorious.

This father-son duo’s status in the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan would undoubtedly be extremely high.

“Look at how happy you are.” Yuchi Snow held a flask of water as she watered the flowers.

“How can I not be jubilant?” Yichuan sat on a nearby stone bench. Flipping his hand, he retrieved a bamboo flask, contentedly drinking

fruit wine. "Ning was able to kill the Aquatic Rhino King before reaching the Xiantian level. Now that he has broken through to the Xiantian level...he was able to send that Riverside Sansi flying with one kick. River Sansi reached the Xiantian level long ago, and is an expert Ki Refiner of the middle Xiantian level, yet he couldn't take a single blow from my son. This means that Ning should have reached the Xiantian level in the Fiendgod Body Refining methods as well!"

According to the news from the black armored guards stationed at the Riverside Tribe, Ning had executed sword flashes to send River He's shortsword flying.

Clearly, Ning had already reached the Xiantian level as a Ki Refiner.

But Yichuan knew his son very well, and knew the weaknesses in his son's arteries. Most likely only after the Fiendgod Body Refining technique raised him to be a Xiantian level and remade his body would Ning be able to make a breakthrough as a Ki Refiner.

"[Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]." Yichuan looked at Snow. "This is the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. The legendary number one Fiendgod Body Refining method! Our Ji clan has never had someone break through to the Xiantian level through it, but Ning accomplished it. In the future, he will definitely be even more powerful than me. His name will be spread throughout the countless tribes, and our Ji clan will become greater and greater!"

Yichuan was filled with a heroic vigor right now.

"The Ji clan will become greater?" Snow nodded gently. "Perhaps because of my son, the Ji clan will reach the same heights of glory as my Yuchi clan once had, but sadly, my Yuchi clan..."

"There is no clan that will exist forever without perishing." Yichuan said. "Even the almighty Grand Xia Dynasty which has existed for countless years, ever since being founded during the Fiendgod Era, exterminated other ancient dynasties before unifying this land. Those ancient dynasties had their own extremely long history as

well. Weren't they destroyed in the end also?"

Yuchi Snow nodded. "I understand. I've already made my peace with this. In Ning's veins also flows the blood of my Yuchi lineage. In the future, when Ning's name is known throughout the boundless earth, my ancestors of the Yuchi clan will feel very happy as well, no doubt."

"Right." Yichuan nodded.

—————
Just as the husband and wife couple were chatting happily, the face of Ji Yichuan, who had been drinking wine from the bamboo tube, suddenly changed. This was the moment where Ning, at Serpentwing's lair, had suddenly been transported into that mysterious, ancient underwater estate relic site.

"What is it?" Seated next to him, Yuchi Snow noticed that her man's mood had dramatically changed. "What happened?"

"Nothing." Yichuan shook his head. "Only, I just remembered something I have to do."

Snow frowned. "You want to deceive me? Your face is completely incapable of fakery. Given your mental willpower, normal matters aren't able to cause you to panic...and for you to panic to this degree, this must be a major event. Speak."

Looking at his wife, Yichuan sighed, "I originally gave Ning a jade sword. No matter how far away he is, I'll be able to sense Ning's location. I had warned him quite strictly that he is not permitted to wander more than ten thousand kilometers away from the West Prefecture City. If he goes beyond it, I will capture him, bring him back, and put him in the prison for three years."

"What, he went more than ten thousand kilometers away from West Prefecture City?" Snow hurriedly asked.

"That's not it." Yichuan's face was unpleasant. "I can't sense the jade sword at all."

"What!" Snow, shocked, suddenly rose to her feet, then began to cough, cough very hard.

"I didn't want to say it, but you forced me to." Yichuan hurriedly helped support his wife, rubbing her back. "Feel better?"

Snow said frantically, "How can you not be able to sense the jade sword? Didn't you say that you can sense it no matter how far away it is? If you can't sense it...does that mean Ning has encountered danger?!"

"Don't panic." Yichuan said hurriedly. "There's two possible answers for why I can't sense the jade sword."

"The first possibility is that Ning has encountered some danger, and then took out the jade sword, but before he was able to break it, the enemy instantly disintegrated the jade sword."

"The second possibility is that Ning was instantly transported to a very distant location, so distant that even I can't sense it."

Snow calmed down.

Snow was very experienced as well, and she nodded. "Even if your jade sword was destroyed and broken into small pieces, you should still be able to sense it. Unless it was completely disintegrated; only then would you be unable to sense it. But right now, Ning is very strong. He was able to send River Sansi flying with one kick. If he encountered such great danger that he had to take out the jade sword...he would be able to break it instantly. How could it be that he wouldn't even have the opportunity to break it?"

"In addition, if an enemy wanted to kill Ning, but was capable of instantly destroying the jade sword in Ning's hands before Ning had a chance to break it, then he would have the power to easily kill Ning. Why bother with breaking the jade sword?"

Snow's train of thought helped her calm down slightly.

Logically speaking, her son shouldn't have died yet!

"So it's the other possibility." Yichuan said. "Ning was instantly transported to an incomparably distant location. I can sense my jade sword no matter where it is...although this is a slight exaggeration, within an area of a million kilometers, at least, I should still be able to sense it. To instantly be transported more than a million kilometers is rather inconceivable as well. I think the more likely answer is that Ning should have been transported to another dimension. He stumbled into a relic site."

"Stumbled into a relic site?" Snow nodded as well.

The two of them had adventured in the outside world, and had significant experience. They knew that this vast, boundless world was incomparably marvelous. The relic sites that were left behind from the Fiendgod era alone were uncountable in number. Some of those greater powers were capable of opening their own small dimension or small world.

"Where was the last place you sensed Ning's at?" Snow asked hurriedly.

"Serpentwing Lake!" Yichuan said.

"Let's go to Serpentwing...cough!" Snow started to cough again.

Yichuan said hurriedly, "I'll go. You can't go out yet."

"Ning is in danger. How can I not go?" Yuchi shook her head. "You know this stems from the illness that I had when I was pregnant with Ning. It's fine."

Seeing the look in his wife's eyes, Yichuan could only nod. "Fine. We'll go find Auntie Flower and borrow her Azure Firebird. We'll head to Serpentwing Lake at full speed."

The vast Serpentwing Lake was very calm.

A godlike husband and wife couple were currently standing atop the back of an enormous Azure Firebird, flying at high speed in the air towards Serpentwing Lake.

"Hurry up and report to the great King that Ji Yichuan has come again. He brought a woman as well."

"Ji Yichuan."

"And sitting on that Azure Firebird."

Some of the lesser aquatic monsters glanced into the sky, then, terrified, hurriedly went to make their report.

On the back of that Azure Firebird, Yichuan and his wife exchanged glances. Soon, Yichuan pointed at a nearby shoreline. "There are black armored guards there. Azure Firebird, go there!" The Azure Firebird hurriedly flew towards that direction, and the two black armored guards that had been keeping watch on the shores of Serpentwing Lake stared in astonishment at the male and female atop the back of the distant Azure Firebird.

"Our respects to you, Commander!" The two black armored guards hurriedly fell to one knee in terror. They all recognized Yichuan.

"I ask you, have you seen my son, Ning?" Yichuan asked directly.

"We saw him." One of them, the taller black armored guard, immediately replied. "Just now, young master Ji Ning was walking atop the surface of the lake, calling out for Serpentwing to come and do battle with him."

"Serpentwing?"

Yichuan and Snow both had the same thought. However, they didn't

believe that their son, at his current level of power, wouldn't even have the chance to break the jade sword when fighting against the Diremonster, Serpentwing. In fact, they even believed that Ning was fully capable of staying alive in the face of Serpentwing's attacks.

"But this time, the Diremonster, Serpentwing, wasn't willing to come out." The black armored guard said. "Young master Ji Ning called him out to do battle multiple times. His voice echoed across the entire lake, and most likely the black armored guards in the other areas all heard it as well. But because Serpentwing still refused to come out, nothing happened. We were too far away, so as to where young master Ji Ning went afterwards while walking on water, we don't know."

The island was located in the center of Serpentwing Lake.

The distance from the shore to the island was tens of kilometers. At the distance of tens of kilometers, the black armored guards were not able to see Ning at all.

"Oh? You are certain they didn't do battle?" Yichuan quickly asked.

"They didn't. We didn't hear anything at all." The two black armored guards were absolutely certain.

Yichuan went to the other black armored guards to ask them these questions, and even sought out Autumn Leaf and Mowu, who were waiting at the designated meeting point. From these two, Yichuan understood that Ning had come in anger, intending to execute Serpentwing, but Serpentwing had remained in hiding and hadn't come out...Ning had remained standing atop the water, and then walked off and disappeared!

"Where did he go?" Standing by the lakeside, Yichuan and Snow stared towards the vast lake, frowning in concern.

"Wife, what do you think?" Yichuan looked at his wife.

Snow said pensively, "There wasn't any disturbance at all. It shouldn't have been a battle. It's very possible that it really was an ancient relic site! These relic sites might be in the middle of an empty area, only sealed off from us by a thin barrier, but we can't see them or sense them at all."

"Perhaps our son is within a world that is hidden within a single speck of sand at the bottom of Serpentwing Lake."

"Or perhaps he is within an ancient, hidden formation."

"Only, the two of us aren't capable of dealing with any of these possibilities." Snow shook her head. "All we can do is wait. Wait for our son to come back to us, alive."

"Right. Wait." Yichuan looked at the immeasurably vast lake as well. "I believe our son will come from afar, walking across the water back to us."

Snow nodded gently, leaning against her man.

They were still waiting. Waiting for their son's return.

Within the corridor of the aquatic estate, it was very dark. It felt that even the passage of time was slow here.

Ning, his divine power fully recovered, finally stood up. Staring at the other corner of the corridor and its corpses, he understood that he had nowhere to retreat to. If he wanted to leave, he had to go forward!

"I have to live." Ning stared at those distant corpses, then walked over.

Chapter 17 - Dao Battle-Armor

Wielding a Darknorth sword in each hand, Ji Ning headed straight towards the center of this ancient corridor.

Suddenly, a thousand or so meters in front of him, several blackish-blue seeds appeared at the same time, four ahead of him, five behind him. These seeds appeared at the same time as nine sets of battle armor. The battle armors were all completely black, and the weapons were identical as well; long staffs that were seemingly made of stone.

Nine seeds. Nine sets of battle gear.

"Hua ..." The blackish-blue seeds suddenly transformed into a liquid, flowing into the armors, then transforming into massive men with blackish-blue skin. These massive men were several meters tall and had two horns in their foreheads. Their faces were ugly, and they had sharp fangs in their mouths. They donned the armor, while simultaneously picking up those three-meter long stone staffs next to them.

The nine ugly giants all glanced at each other, their eyes filled with savagery and excitement.

"It's been so long. We're finally out again!"

"This time, the person we have to deal with is this human youth. Such a tender-fleshed human. I can squeeze him to death by myself. The nine of us combined, and with these godly weapons and armor, haha...this is going to be too easy."

"Set up the formation first."

The nine ugly giants all began to chant the words to some foreign tongue which Ning couldn't understand, but his face quickly changed, because he understood that these ugly giants which had sprouted from those seeds were intelligent, and even capable of

conversation!

The two ends of the halls once again became filled with dense fog.

“Human, prepare for death.” The nine ugly giants all released furious roars. The ancient armor on their bodies immediately began to emit dazzling black light. The black light, emitting the stench of blood, quickly connected with each other, forming an enormous spiderweb in mid-air.

Ning was shocked. “Dao Battle-Armor?”

Dao Soldiers were a type of seed-soldier often used by the Grand Xia Dynasty. The Ji clan’s most powerful seed-soldier, the ‘Scarlet Guardians’, were the lowest-level type of Dao Soldiers. Every single Dao Soldier’s armor contained a large number of rune inscriptions, and the Dao Soldiers were capable of combining their energy together to attack the opponent together. They were also capable of combining their defense.

Dao Battle-Armor like that of the Scarlet Guardians of the Ji clan were at most capable of allowing nine of the Scarlet Guardians to combine forces. Once they joined together, nine Scarlet Guardians were even capable of giving an early Xiantian expert a good fight.

What’s more, the Ji clan had five hundred thousand of these powerful seed-soldiers, the Scarlet Guards!

This was the true backbone of the Ji clan.

Normally, missions were carried out by black armored guards. Each time the Scarlet Guardians were sent out, it was only after the Ji clan’s Five Prefectures all agreed to send them out, and it would have to involve a major event of the Ji clan.

“Dao Battle-Armor. Aren’t they all used for Houtian experts? And they should be covered with a large number of runes that can be seen at a glance.” Ning stared at them. “But these nine strange giants have armor that don’t have any runes on top of them, and each of them

have power that is not weaker than that of a Xiantian."

"This is going to be trouble." Ning held his breath.

Dao Battle-Armor which Xiantian experts could use was something which the six hegemons of Swallow Mountain simply did not have. Ning hadn't even heard of such a thing. Most likely, only the armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty had them!

"Kill!" The nine ugly giants raised their large, thick staffs, charging towards Ning from both directions with angry roars, that enormous illusory spider web still connecting them from up above.

Ning immediately transformed into a ray of smoke, quickly pouncing towards the direction which only had four of those strange ugly giants, who were maintaining a distance of several meters from each other as they wielded their massive stone staffs and charged forward wildly with long steps.

"Kill!" One of the ugly giants raised his enormous stone staff up high, then smashed downwards.

"Come on." Ning let his strength explode as well. His Fiendgod-like power completely filled his Darknorth swords, and he took this blow head on. He wanted to get a clear understanding of the strength of these ugly fellows.

Swish !

The stone staff was as thick as a man's thigh and over three meters long. It slashed through the air, smashing down on Ning's Darknorth swords. Immediately afterwards, with a 'Swoosh!' Ning's entire body was sent flying backwards, while the strange giant only took a single step back, garbling in his racial tongue, "This human has great strength. However, he still cannot compare to me, much less the nine of us combined."

Although Ning had only fought one of them head on, because of the Dao Battle-Armor...in reality, that staff blow had contained the

combined strength of those nine strange giants.

Flying backwards through the air, Ning felt his entire body was numb. His hand was damaged, and even the Darknorth sword in that hand flew out.

"Can't take it head on!" In mid-air, Ning flipped over, his Fiendgod body quickly healing. Still in mid-air, he stepped onto the sides of the corridor walls, then like a giant Roc, scurried out, quickly leaping past the oncoming charge of those nine strange ugly giants.

"Don't run!"

"What sort of talent is fleeing?"

"Humans only know how to run."

The nine strange giants opened their fanged mouths, howling angrily. They discovered that this human was even faster than them.

Ning pointed from a distance. "Waterflame Lotuses!"

Huahuahua...

Every single Waterflame Lotus was formed from a fire lotus petal and a water lotus petal. Six sets of Waterflame Lotuses appeared out of nowhere, completely surrounding those nine ugly giants within. Every single lotus petal was slowly swiveling in opposite directions, forming a terrifying grinding, killing force.

"What a powerful human." The nine ugly giants came to a halt and looked at each other. "Without this godly armor, we probably would've been injured long ago."

Ning saw that the nine giants had come to a halt, and were even conversing in their strange tongue.

But his ever-successful Waterflame Lotuses were completely unable to harm them.

"No use." Ning was surprised. Last time, when fighting against Ironwood Zhan, Zhan had relied on his formation and his Diamond Seal to hold on for a long time, which let Ning understand that his Waterflame Lotuses couldn't actually break through everything. "My Waterflame Lotuses were developed just recently, and were originally meant to protect me. Thus there are some deficiencies when using them to attack.

Wielding their stone staffs, the nine strange giants once more charged forward en masse.

"Lotus Protection." In the area around Ning, three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals appeared, surrounding him. When the nine strange giants charged over and collided with the swiveling Waterflame Lotus, they were all impacted and were no longer able to attack Ning together.

Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords, chose one of them to attack!

"Die."

His sword flashed like fire, moving at astonishing speed as he displayed the killing technique of the [Thunderflame Sword], the 'Thunderflash Flint'.

Hua! Hua! Hua!

Rays of sword light shot towards the giant, who howled with valiant fury as he brandished his stone staff. The stone staff was incomparably heavy. Last time, when Ning had struck it, his entire body had gone numb. No longer daring to take it head on at all, Ning completely relied upon his marvelous sword techniques to deal with the giant in front of him.

The battle armor was only capable of protecting part of the body. The head and some other areas were still exposed.

Ning's sword blows were all aimed at this giant's head!

Only, each blow was hampered by that dense black light. After just barely breaking through the obstruction, it was only capable of leaving some wounds on the giant's face, which immediately would heal, leaving the giant unwounded.

"Kill, kill, kill." Ning was going all out.

"I want to live! So I have to kill you all!" Ning used all his strength, even filling the Darknorth swords with his Xiantian ki as well. All he could do, however, was to leave some flesh wounds on these strange giants. The giants were capable of completely ignoring the negligible drop to their strength from these wounds.

They fought for the amount of time it would take to brew a pot of tea.

Because he had been controlling the Waterflame Lotus this entire time, and also fighting all out, his divine power was being used up at a fast rate.

"Their power isn't dropping at all. I'm not even able to badly injure them." Ning could sense that he had less than half his divine power remaining. He didn't dare to keep fighting them head on like this. He hurriedly flashed through their encirclement.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Ning utilized the Windwing Evasion, scurrying first in this direction, then in that direction, dodging the pursuit and attacks of these strange giants.

"Human, don't run."

"You won't be able to run."

"Humans are only able to run." These nine ugly giants roared angrily as they ran forward majestically, continuing their attacks. Ning didn't take them head on at all, relying on his Windwing Evasion to throw them off time and time again.

In his heart, Ning was sighing.

He had trained in swordplay for so long, but in the end, it was still the Windwing Evasion technique which allowed him to stay alive!

Another long period of time passed.

"What should I do?" While fleeing, Ning was thinking frantically. Staring at the nine furiously roaring giants, who didn't seem to grow tired at all, he thought, "They have been chasing me for half a day now, but they still aren't getting tired. My divine power, however, is down to 20%."

The Windwing Evasion technique required him to use his Crimsonbright divine power as well! Although it used it up at a rate that was far slower than the rate it was used up in battle, running around for half a day would consume a great amount as well.

"My full-strength sword attacks are only capable of giving them some light flesh wounds." Ning said to himself. "But the nine of them are actually those nine transformed seeds, just like those eighty one golden armored soldiers I fought earlier. When I shattered their army, they immediately reformed."

Ning understood very well...

Even if he were to pierce through their heads, they still probably wouldn't die.

More importantly, his full strength attacks were only capable of leaving behind some flesh wounds.

"What should I do?"

"What exactly should I do?" Ning constantly pondered.

He had no options.

Despair!

"In the long-ago distant past, those Fiendgod Body Refiners of the Xiantian level who were transported probably watched, just like me, in despair as their divine power was used up, and then were killed." Ning now understood his weakness. His weakness was that his [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was only at the fourth stage.

This corridor was meant for Fiendgod Body Refiners of the Xiantian level to go through.

When Immortal Juhua had accepted disciples, most likely the majority of those who had attempted these trials were at the peak Xiantian level as Fiendgod Body Refiners! But Ji Ning? Only when reaching the sixth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] would he be a peak Xiantian. He was currently only at the fourth stage! In terms of the purity or the depth of his divine power, he was still at an incomparable distance from the limits of the Xiantian level.

It was only natural that he wouldn't be able to complete these three trials.

"Compared to those Xiantian experts who wanted to become the disciple of Immortal Juhua and came here to attempt these trials, my divine power is very shallow." Ning understood. "Fortunately, I gained a hint of understanding in the true meaning of the Dao, and then developed the 'Waterflame Lotus' technique, which is why I was lucky enough to complete the first trial! Otherwise, I probably wouldn't even have been able to complete the first one."

"But...there are three trials."

"Forget about the third trial. This second trial..." Ning could sense that he already had dropped to less than 10% of his Crimsonbright divine power left. Deep in his heart, he felt both panic and despair.

Chapter 18 – Determining Life and Death

"I can't keep running. If I keep running, the Crimsonbright divine power in my body will be completely used up. Once my divine power is used up, I will definitely die. I won't even be able to struggle." Ji Ning suddenly came to a halt, then turned to look towards the four ugly giants, already extremely angry due to the long chase. The ugly giants wielded those stone staffs, charging forward with large steps.

"He finally stopped running."

"The human should be out of divine power by now."

"Competing with us in running. We could run for several more days without fear." The nine ugly giants wanted to devour this human in front of them.

Ning wielded a sword in each hand, standing there calmly.

Faced with life and death, Ning's spirit was incomparably calm and empty. In this moment, he had thrown all other thoughts to the back of his mind, and in his heart, the only thing remaining was this battle.

"Hmph." The nine ugly giants charged forward, and Ning immediately charged forward as well. Three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals slowly swiveled around him, causing the giants to be unable to attack Ning simultaneously when they drew near him.

Ning's sword struck out.

A sword like fire!

Wanton slaughter!

"Haha, his sword is too weak."

"Too weak." The ugly giants didn't care at all. Ning's sword pierced

through the protection of that thick black light, but was only able to leave behind a hint of a wound.

Although Ning was very calm, he was using his full force.

“Not much divine force left.” Ning could feel that his divine power was ebbing. Grinding his teeth, he suddenly charged forward like a giant Roc soaring into the skies.

Swoosh !

The corridor was a hundred meters high, so Ning leapt a hundred meters into the air. While flying, two ancient Dao-seals appeared in Ning's hands. One was a Light Body Seal, while the other was a Divine Movement Seal. The Xiantian ki in his body immediately rushed into the two Dao-seals, and two queer surges of power immediately flowed into Ning's body.

“The last sword!” Ning hit the very top of the corridor, and then with two kicks, released all of his power!

He charged downwards!

Fast!

Fast!

Fast!

Relying on the force from springboarding off the ceiling, the always-terrifying speed of the [Windwing Evasion], and the force of gravity pulling him downwards, as well as the Light Body Seal and the Divine Movement Seal, his speed became all the more terrifying! In this moment, Ning's downward charging speed had reached a heretofore unreached level, as fast as light!

Speed is power. When speed reaches a certain extreme, the power of the sword would naturally be great as well.

"The raindrop holds the meaning of Raindrop Pierces Rocks. The raindrop can become a Rain Line, a Thin Stream, a river or an ocean." As Ning charged downwards, he was using the killing stroke of the Raindrop Sutra, the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks'. As he did so, in his mind, he couldn't help but think back to the scene of his father, Ji Yichuan, teaching him swordplay. His father had once demonstrated all nine stances of the Raindrop Sword for him, three times.

At this moment, when faced with death, Ning immediately understood.

When his father demonstrated the swordplay, he moved very slowly. He started from 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks', then moved to 'Rain Line', 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow', 'Merciless Waterflow', and then finally returned to the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks'.

Right after that, it transformed into 'Drizzling Rain', 'Tempest Curtain', 'Water Curtain Links to Heaven', and finally returned once more to the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks'!

After that, it transformed once more into 'Thin Streams Flow Forever', 'Watertight', before finally returning to 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks' once more!

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks is the most powerful attack, but also the weakest attack. The amazing mysteries in the [Raindrop Sutra] are inexhaustible and boundless. One can spend a lifetime training in it. Remember...Raindrop Pierces Rocks!" Yichuan had said these words. At the time, Ning had felt he understood them.

But after that night of meditating on the Dao, and these repeated life-and-death battles, Ning at this moment finally, truly understood what his father had labored to teach him.

"This is the attack."

"Raindrop...!"

Ning, charging downwards at high speed with twin swords,

immediately drew away one of the stone staffs of an ugly giant, sending it smashing to one side. With his right hand, Ning pierced directly towards the ugly giant's skull! The ugly giant's stone staff had missed its downwards smashing mark; naturally, he didn't have the chance to raise it back to block, but he wasn't afraid at all. "He can't hurt me."

"...Pierces Rocks!" Ning only stared calmly at the head of that giant.

Chi !

His sword was like water, like a heavy raindrop landing upon a stone. Pa! The sword instantly pierced through that thick black barrier, driving itself deep into the head of that giant, even into the brain. The terrifyingly natural power of the blow suddenly exploded. There was nothing in the body that could block it, and so, instantly, with a 'Swish!' sound, the head exploded. It transformed into a puddle of black water, and the armor and the stone staff all fell to the ground.

"Collect." Ning immediately collected both the armor as well as the stone staff into his own storage magic treasure.

The pool of black water quickly reformed into the strange giant again, who called out in shock, "How is that possible? How is that possible?"

"Nothing is impossible." Ning was now completely confident. He understood that these nine strange giants were no longer able to stop him.

"Die."

Ning only had to control his Waterflame Lotus to quickly once more smash the strange giant into a puddle of black water. Without the protection of the Dao Battle-Armor, the giant wasn't able to resist the crushing force of the Waterflame Lotus at all.

"The eight of you can die as well now." Ning transformed into a blur, once more flashing forth like lightning.

All nine Dao Battle-Armors had to be linked together for them to be able to assist each other. Right now, the strange giants weren't able to combine their strength at all. Now, when facing Ning's vastly improved swordplay...they became unable to flee. All of them were killed, one after the other, and even their Dao Battle-Armor and stone staves were stored by Ning into his storage treasure.

"Die."

Ning stood there unmoving, only relying on the Solar and Lunar Divine Tattoos to control six Waterflame Lotuses, repeatedly grinding down on those nine giants, smashing them time and time again into black water. Even though they reformed, Ning would simply grind them apart again.

After being crushed just a few times, the nine strange giants completely collapsed and weren't able to reform.

The fog at the two ends of the corridor slowly faded away.

"Father." Ning gently murmured.

Although that night he had spent meditating on the Dao resulted in Ning gaining a hint of true understanding regarding fire, water, and wind, understanding was nothing more than understanding; whether or not it could be used was another matter. In the past, Ning only understood the Waterflame Lotus, this single technique, which was meant for self-protection, not for attacking.

But just now, relying on the guidance his father had given him to be his foundation, in that moment between life and death, he had finally understood the true meaning of the [Raindrop Sutra] – the True Meaning of the Raindrop!

In terms of levels of understanding...

The level above 'one with the world' was that of the 'True Meaning'!

"The True Meaning of the Raindrop originates from the 'raindrop'."

Ning sighed in amazement. "A single raindrop is the source. When there are many raindrops, it can transform into a line and become the 'Rain Line'. When there are even more raindrops, naturally it can begin to flow and have life force, which is the 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow'. And once the waves swell to an unblockable tide, that becomes 'Merciless Waterflow'. But when the countless raindrops all come together, you can still describe it as just a single raindrop."

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks is the most powerful attack of the Raindrop Sutra, but also its weakest." Ning laughed. "That is true for defense as well. Drizzling Rain, Tempest Curtain, Water Curtain Links to Heaven...they all become Raindrop Pierces Rocks in the end. Thin Streams Flow Forever and Watertight also become Raindrop Pierces Rocks."

"The True Meaning of the Raindrop."

"An unending circle." Ning sighed in amazement. "No wonder Father said that one can spend a lifetime on the Raindrop Sutra."

Without question, his father had clearly understood the True Meaning of the Raindrop long ago.

One truly could spend a lifetime to understand that the [Raindrop Sutra] could infinitely circle in on itself to grow even more powerful.

Strictly speaking...

Upon gaining insight into the True Meaning of the Raindrop, the [Raindrop Sutra] itself actually became without value. Perhaps the ancestor who had originally developed the [Raindrop Sutra] himself only reached this level, the True Meaning of the Raindrop, after having in some lucky circumstance developed these nine techniques that could forever cycle without ending. But of course, it was also possible that it was some sort of powerful Fiendgod or powerful Immortal who intentionally developed this sort of inexhaustible, circular, increasingly powerful swordplay.

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks. Raindrop Pierces Rocks." Ning chanted softly, and then he shut his eyes to rest. That battle had been too exhausting.

After resting and eating to his fill, Ning's divine power recovered and then he began to perfect his True Meaning of the Raindrop. Upon having learned the True Meaning of the Raindrop...he was completely capable of using one small raindrop after another to create a thin line, then execute the 'Rain Line'. The power of this attack was far greater than that of Raindrop Pierces Rocks.

Time flowed on.

Ning ate and drank. Fortunately, prior to this, his kalestone and Ironwood Zhan's storage treasure all had some food within it. What he lacked right now was time. As time went out, if he was able to increase his [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] by another stage, if he could make his swordplay become even more powerful, then his chances of survival would naturally become greater.

Ning understood...

He had relied on the Waterflame Lotus to make it through the first trial, while in the second trial, he had been pushed to his limits, at which point he had gained insights into the True Meaning of the Raindrop, finally making that breakthrough in peril. Based on the increase in difficulty, the third trial would definitely be very terrifying. Since Immortal Juhua had publicly called for a disciple, one could imagine how difficult this third trial must have been.

By Serpentwing Lake.

Ji Yichuan and Yuchi Snow, husband and wife, were temporarily staying here by the side of Serpentwing Lake. They were quietly

waiting. Waiting for their son to return. But as one day after another passed, their hearts grew increasingly frantic, because the more time passed, the lower the chances were that their son was still alive.

"Cough, cough." Snow was coughing.

"Don't panic, don't panic." Yichuan saw that in one short month, his wife's illness had rapidly worsened, making him feel all the more pity for her.

"I don't want to panic either." Snow stared at the endless waters of Serpentwing Lake, then sighed. "But Ning, Ning, he...it's been more than a month. Why hasn't he come back yet. Why hasn't he come back yet!"

To Yuchi Snow, her son was her whole world.

"Our son will definitely come back. Definitely. When you were pregnant with Ning, the roots of your illness took hold. You can't be angry, and you can't panic. You know that. Take care of your body." Yichuan's heart was as frantic as a scorching fire. In his heart, he cared deeply about his son, but he was also worried about his wife by his side. Ever since that great battle they had fought on the way back from the Darknorth Seas...

Although the Whitewater Hound had braved a serious injury to take his wife away and flee, and their son had been lucky enough to survive, his wife and his son had both been injured.

"Ning." Yichuan stared at the boundless lake waters as well. "You have to come back alive."

Within the endless hallway.

There was no day or night within this hallway, and there was no way to clearly judge the passing of time. His appetite was enormous, but

the amount of food in the kalestone wasn't that much, nor the amount in Ironwood Zhan's storage treasure. After all, they could hunt for food at any time in Swallow Mountain, while the kalestone had size limitations, so why put in too much?

After a month, all of the stored food was completely devoured.

"Thin Streams Flow Forever and Rain Line have all reached the True Meaning of the Raindrop' level." Ning said to himself. One was a defensive technique, while the other was offensive. His power could be considered to have greatly advanced. "After a month of training, my divine power has grown stronger as well. This third trial is the final battle..."

Ning understood how terrifying this final trial would be.

He also understood that if he passed through it, then he would survive.

But if he failed, he would die!

"Whether it is life or it is death, it all comes down to this."

"If I die, I will most likely go to the Netherworld Kingdom again. This time, I probably won't be so lucky as to avoid drinking Granny Meng's Elixir. After drinking it, I will no longer be myself." Ning had a dim sense right now, the deep, unconscious sense which one would have when one's soul grew powerful. His unconscious sense felt a type of incomparable terror right now, as though he was about to face an incomparably terrifying trial.

"Time to determine life or death."

Wielding the Darknorth swords in his hands, Ning headed directly for a twisting corridor, which still had three corpses on it that hadn't completely rotted away, as well as some magic treasures scattered on the floor.

Ning used his divine sense to pick them up, calmly binding them.

Upon investigating, he found that there were thousands of magic treasures stored within a storage treasure, all of which he could easily fuse. Indeed, these were all unranked magic treasures. However...such a terrifying number still represented an incomparably astonishing wealth. Ning was very calm though. Because...if he died, what use would these be?

"You finally came." A hoarse voice rang out, in the tongue of the humans which was spoken everywhere throughout the Grand Xia Dynasty.

Ning immediately looked over. From afar, in a place filled with black mist, a figure walked out. He had a crooked body, an oily green gaze, and his entire body was covered with black fur. He seemed to walk very slowly, but with each step, he travelled dozens of meters. "A pity. You are too weak."

Hua !

In an instant, he appeared in front of Ning. His fan-sized, big grey palm carried a dense, deathly aura which slammed down towards Ning. This simple slap was so fast that Ning was completely unable to dodge. All he could do was relying on using his two swords to execute his ultimate defensive technique, 'Thin Streams Flow Forever', to block it. This 'Thin Streams Flow Forever' technique was currently also holding the True Meaning of the Raindrop within it.

"Swish !" Ning was knocked flying, and his hands instantly turned numb.

"No..." Ning wanted to tighten his grip over the Darknorth swords in his hands. If his swords were sent flying, how would he use his sword techniques? But his fingers were already completely numbed and had no feeling. Hua! Hua! His shattered fingers and his two Darknorth swords flew far away, smashing into the distant walls and emitting a clear ringing sound.

Every part of Ning's skin had split open, and he was surrounded by a

bloody mist. The fingers on both hands had been shattered. And so, his entire body covered by that bloody mist, he flew backwards and smashed against the distant ground.

Glossary

PEOPLE:

Gods:

Pangu : The creator deity who made the universe, the Fiendgod of Primordial Chaos.

Nuwa : The creator of humans, currently supposedly the most powerful god in existence and the only one to reach Pangu's level.

Cui Jue : The Lord of Cui Palace, the First Judge of the Dead. Also from Earth.

Grandma Meng : Dispenses her special 'elixir' in the land of the dead, which causes the dead to forget their memories before being reincarnated.

Ji Clan :

Ji Ning : The main character of this novel.

Ji Yichuan : The father of Ning, nicknamed the 'Raindrop Sword'. Number one expert of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

Yuchi Snow : The mother of Ning. Member of the Yuchi clan.

Ji Ninefire : The Patriarch of all five prefectures of the Ji clan.

Ji Young : The Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

Ji Lee : Nicknamed the 'Fire God', the number two expert of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture. Leads a faction opposed to Prefecture Lord Young.

Ji Jadewich : The son of Ji Lee.

Ji Grizzly : The adoptive son of Ji Lee, had been taken in as an infant by a grizzly bear monster.

Ji Redflower : Friend of Ji Yichuan, rides an Azure Firebird.

Spring Grass : Also known as 'Miwa'. One of the two maidservants of Ning who took care of him as he grew up.

Blacktooth : The father of Spring Grass, and the chief of Blacktooth

Tribe.

Autumn Leaf : One of the two maidservants of Ning who took care of him as he grew up.

Blindfish : The number one archery expert, serves the Ji clan.

Mowu: An experienced Ninefang Warrior, loyal to Ji Yichuan. Follows Ning on his first adventure along with Autumn Leaf.

Ironwood Clan

Ironwood Zhan: A late Ki Refiner Xiantian expert of the Ironwood clan. Has a Bi'an Tiger as his spirit beast. Wielded the **Blackwood Vinewhip** as his weapon.

Miscellaneous

Juhua Immortal : A powerful Loose Immortal who lived for millions of years. Controlled an Immortal estate which he was the third master of.

Rampart : The disciple of the Juhua Immortal. Died somewhere.

CREATURES:

Godbeasts :

Armored Wurm : A dragon type Godbeast that seems to be like an Ankylosaurus.

Whitewater Hound : A large, snow-white hound-type creature. Ji Yichuan has one, who once saved Ning and Snow.

Emerald Skyserpent: A serpent-type Godbeast, one of the more powerful creatures in Eastmount Marsh. Fought against Ning several times when Ning was at the peak Houtian stage. Capable of 'Void Blink' upon reaching the 'one with the world' level.

Howling Moonwolf :

Earthquake Rhino :

Redclawed Goldenraven :

Thundersea Owl :

Landwyrn :**Other Monsters :**

Serpentwing : A named late Xiantian level winged serpent, lives in Serpentwing Lake.

Azure Firebird : A flying fire-type bird-type monster. One is in service to the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

ITEMS:

Dao Battle-Armor: A type of armor that allows multiple users to join their strength together.

Dao-seal : A magic scroll imbued with certain powers, such as the 'Divine Movement Seal', 'Light Body Seal', and more.

Kalestone : A naturally occurring gemstone which is like a 'bag of holding', able to store a certain amount of materials in an extradimensional space.

Goldstar Shirt : A naturally occurring treasure which protects against all attacks below the Xiantian level.

Darknorth swords : A set of three swords, extremely sharp. Originally a damaged 'magic treasure' of the 'flying sword' variety that was ranked. Purchased by Ning.

Blackwood Vinewhip : A magic treasure previously held by Ironwood Zhan.

Traceless Talisman : A single-use talisman that can allow a person to travel ten thousand kilometers in an instant.

TECHNIQUES:**Sword Techniques:****Possessed by the Ji Clan :**

[**Raindrop Sutra**]: The most defensive of the Ji clan. The technique

which Ji Yichuan became famous for using, thus being nicknamed the 'Raindrop Sword'. Includes the attacks: *'Drizzling Rain', 'Rain Line', 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks', 'Thin Streams Flow Forever', 'Tempest Curtain', 'Watertight', 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow', 'Merciless Waterflow'* .

[Thunderflame Sword]: The most offensive technique of the Ji clan. Only three stances were found in the burnt manual, but despite that, is incredibly powerful. No defensive stances. Includes the attacks: *Thunderflash Flint, Blazing Thunderclap, Moth Flies Into the Flame* .

[Polaris Secret Manual]: A very balanced, orthodox technique, part of the [Polaris Sword Manual].

[Illusion Sutra]: An insidious technique that could be applied to any weapon. Allowed one to hide their true powers and actions.

[Melody of 10000 Swords]: The first 'elite' swordplay the Ji clan obtained, which they themselves developed. The most complicated, yet also the simplest when mastered.

Formation Techniques

Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation : A formation which Ironwood Zhan of the Ironwood clan had, set up by using eight formation flags. Very powerful at the Xiantian level.

Lesser Thousand Sword Formation : A formation of an enemy of the Juhua Immortal, uses up to hundreds of sword-type magic treasures.

Fiendgod Body Refining Techniques :

Possessed by the Ji Clan :

[Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]: The technique Ning chooses. The unquestioned best Fiendgod Body Refining, but also the hardest to learn. One has to be able to sense the Great Yang (Sun) and the Great Ying (Moon), then absorb their energies. If one is extremely suited, the first time training it, small balls of energy will appear in the trainer's hands, with the left having the 'Moon' with a picture of an 'Osmanthus Tree', while the right would have the 'Sun' with a picture of the 'Golden Crow'.

[Calamity Fiend] , [Indestructible Blood Fiend], [Song of the Inferno], [Vajra Buddhist Sutras], [Freeform Soul] , [Eternal Mysteries of the Yellow Earth] , [Spirit Fox Sutra] , [Sutra of the Future Buddha]

Footwork Techniques:

Shadewind Steps : A unique set of footwork techniques which only Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, knows. Taught to Ning.

Windwing Evasion : Another set of footwork techniques which only Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, knows. Can only be trained at the Xiantian level.

Divine Abilities:

Kuafu Sunchaser :

72 Transformations :

Three Heads, Six Arms :

Houyi Shooting the Sun :

Heavenly Transformation: Windwing Evasion (see above)

Other Techniques:

Nuwa Painting visualization technique : A soul-strengthening visualization technique taught by Lord Cui. Supposedly an elite skill even in the Deva realm, much less the mortal realms.

Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha : The visualization technique used by the Juhua Immortal.

Waterflame Lotus : A technique which Ning develops during a night of meditation by a pool through a hint of the Dao which he came to understand.

LOCATIONS:

Grand Xia Dynasty : The empire which rules over the entire world. Trillions of years old.

Stillwater Commandery: The Commandery region in which Swallow

Mountain is located. Controlled by the Marquisate of Stillwater.

Dark North Sea : The unending ocean in the north of the world. Where Yichuan and Snow met and conceived Ning.

Swallow Mountain : A massive area, where Ji clan of the West Prefecture is one of the local hegemons.

Serpentwing Lake : A large lake a hundred kilometers long in the Swallow Mountain Area. Lair to the Xiantian monster, Serpentwing.

Eastmount Marsh : A large marsh with a lake in the middle of it. Home to many Xiantian level Diremonsters.

TERMS AND PHRASES:

Power Levels :

Houtian : Lifespan of a hundred years.

Xiantian : Lifespan of two hundred years. 'Diremonster' is a term used to refer to monsters who have reached this level.

Zifu : The 'Violet Palace'. At this level, one will be addressed as Zifu Disciple. Lifespan of five hundred years. Generally capable of 'dividing the mind'

Wanxiang : 'Myriad Manifestations'. At this level, one will be addressed as Wanxiang Adept. Lifespan of eight hundred years. Generally capable of 'divine will', which allows them to control objects with their mind.

Primordial : Can be referred to as Primordial Daoist. Generally capable of 'divine sense', an extrasensory ability.

Void : Can be referred to as 'Land Immortal', or 'Earthly Immortal'. In the later levels of the Void stage, a heavenly tribulation will test them. If they fail, then they will die and their spirits will be extinguished. If a Primordial's body is destroyed but manages to escape with his soul, then he will become a 'Loose Immortal', whose power is roughly on par with the 'Earth Immortals'.

Celestial Immortal : Only at this stage can one be considered to have ascended beyond the Three Realms and no longer be formed by the Five Elements!

Insight Levels:

Basic => Advanced => 'One With the World' => 'True Meaning of the Dao'=> 'Dao Realm' => 'Dao Path'

The Greater Universe :

Three Realms : The 'Heaven' Realm, the 'Mortal Realm', and the 'Netherworld Kingdom Realm'

Six Realms of Reincarnation : Deva, Asura (these two are Heaven realm), Human, Animal (these two are 'Mortal' realm), Preta Ghost, Hell (these two are 'Netherworld Kingdom' realm)

Book of Life and Death : The book on which every person's fate is written, their birth, their life, and their death. A person can change their fate by their actions, however. Controlled by Lord Cui.

Miscellaneous Terms and Phrases:

Beasthead : Used to refer to an amount of gold that weighed ten pounds in the world where Ning was born into for his second life.

Fiendgod : Powerful creatures that were born from nature itself and possess unbelievable might. The creator of the universe, Pangu, was himself a Fiendgod.

Godbeasts : Monstrous beasts that have the lineage of the Fiendgods in them. Far more powerful than normal beasts.

Fiendgod Body Refining Technique : Techniques meant to build up the body and make it as powerful as a Fiendgod's. Far more powerful than Ki Refining of the same level. Cannot utilize magic treasures unless also training in Ki Refining.

Ki Refining technique : Techniques meant to build up internal ki energy, which allows one to use magic treasures at the Xiantian level.

Ninefang Warriors : A term for peak Houtian level warriors in the Swallow Mountain region.

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